Domain & Learning Manager Frequently Asked Questions

I. Reports

Q I-1: How do I get access to reports on users outside of my domain?

A I-1: Administrators set up domains in the LMS based on the VA's organizational structure. Administrative Roles relate to domains and are restricted to domains in the organizational hierarchy. Individuals receive Administrative Role assignments based on business needs for LMS Administrators to perform certain functions.

Q I-2: Why aren't ALL Items included in the custom Deficiency Report?

A I-2: In order to optimize system performance, LMS leadership made a decision to run compliance/deficiency reports against only Items that are required and assigned to staff. For example, if an Item Manager is setting up an Item that staff will receive as an assignment, and he or she would like to run a compliance/deficiency report, he or she should request to add the Item(s) to the Mandatory Reports Table by sending an email to the VA LMS Help Desk valmshelp@va.gov.

Q I-3: How long does it take to implement a new custom report?

A I-3: It depends on the requirements for the report. If there is information that an Administrator needs but does not see a report that provides it, he or she can send an email with the criteria for the report to the VA LMS Help Desk, who will either help find an existing report that meets the information need or will escalate the request to Operations & Maintenance (O&M) to do an Ad Hoc report.

Q I-4: Saved reports don't always return all data. For example, if a user changes organizations, the report output does not reflect the removal of that user.

A I-4: The important thing to remember is if there is a problem running a report, please alert Help Desk staff so they can provide assistance, or raise the issue during a Domain Manager call. A rule of thumb is if a saved report is not returning all the data requested, it may be necessary to remove the report from the saved report list. Depending on the criteria used to create the saved report, it may or may not reflect the transfer of a user when he or she changes organizations.

Q I-5: Is there is a report we can run that lists all Administrators and their roles by domains?

A I-5: There is not currently a report available that lists Administrators and their domains.

If a Domain Manager requires this type of report, he or she should send a request to the VA LMS Help Desk (valmshelp@va.gov). They will escalate the request to O&M, who will generate an Ad Hoc report similar to the ones the VA Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are providing at the DM/LM training sessions.

There is an O&M project that was put on hold that would provide a report on Profile Maintenance of all Administrators and roles assigned to a domain, notifying Domain Managers when an Administrator separates from the VA or transfers to another domain. The next software version of Plateau handles Users and Administrators differently than how it handles them now. We might be able to add this functionality in conjunction with the 2011 software update.

Q I-6: Can an Instructor run the Scheduled Offering (SO) Roster Report? If yes, what is the lowest level role he or she must to have?

A I-6: If the Instructor is an Administrator, he or she has no restrictions on which reports he or she can run. In the LMS, an Instructor is a resource, similar to having a location for the training, the right equipment in the training room etc. For example, when presenting at a facility, Instructors are responsible for setting up and scheduling training, so the SM (Scheduling Manager) role could be appropriate.

Any Administrator can see the SO Roster (Reports>Learning>Scheduled Offering Roster). For instance, those with Help Desk roles can pull this Roster for their domains. The SM role can also register/withdraw users and generate the SO Roster. Individuals with the Registration Manager (RM) role can do all this AND add new SOs for their domains.

Q I-7: When can DMs and LMs begin creating custom reports?

A I-7: There is no plan to allow Administrators the ability to create Ad Hoc reports using the Current Reports engine. If an Administrator receives a request for information from the LMS for which there is no established report, the Administrator should send the request to the VA LMS Help Desk to provide the data.

Q I-8: If a training Item displays as required, can an Administrator run a Compliance/Deficiency Report on users who have not yet completed the training, once the Help Desk adds the report to the Report Table? Or, do these reports also have to be assigned as required? What about an Administrator who just selects this report from the report catalog?

A I-8: A user must have the Item/Course assigned as a required Item in order for the user to appear on the Compliance/Deficiency Report. The reason for this is to avoid showing the unaccessed Item as a deficiency for someone who is not required to take the course, but who adds the course to his or her Learning Plan independent of any requirement.

II. PROFILE MAINTENANCE

Q II-1: Is there a default time zone for profiles created through Profile Maintenance/Profile Update?

A II-1: The Human Resource (HR) Connector or web services programmatically adds users' time zones to the LMS. This works through synching between a table of equivalents in the Electronic Data Repository (EDR) and 'Job Locations' in the LMS. This table populates with the correct time zone for each job location. Alternatively, Administrators' time zones are not automatic and must be manually assigned to their respective profiles. Instructors should reinforce this during training, especially at locations that are not on Eastern Time.

Q II-2: Why can't I get access to multiple Regional Offices in Profile Maintenance?

A II-2: The VA's organizational structure dictates the setup of Profile Maintenance Access. If an Administrator has Profile Maintenance Access to the Western Area Office (WAO) Domain, he or she will be able to add and manage profiles in the 16 Regional Offices that comprise the WAO. Profile Maintenance access is a tool to add/manage users in the LMS. Only staff that have business needs to manage LMS profiles should have access to Profile Maintenance. If an Administrator needs to manage profiles in domains other than the one to which he or she is assigned, the Administrator should obtain a role at the next higher level.

Q II-3: In the list of ATTRIBUTES (Assignment Profiles), some are in PAID and are usable; some are not. How can Administrators/DMs and LMs determine which attributes are useful?

A II-3: The attributes listed are a non-standard functionality, and contain all of the fields that comprise the user profile. Some of the listed attributes are there because they supported eHRI functionality during our upgrade to v5.8. The data to populate the attributes comes from PAID and is only as accurate as what the local HR inputs.

Q II-4: How will we know when someone deletes or adds attributes?

A II-4: The best advice is to avoid using custom columns (if possible). For example, when there is a choice between a Custom Column Row 1160 Job Series and a Job Position attribute, select the Job Position. Always click the 'Assignment Profile User Preview button after setting the attributes to ensure correctly setting the filter.

Q II-5: Why do new employee profiles get overwritten and erased when the employee gets added into Profile Maintenance prior to getting added into PAID?

A II-5: PAID is the authoritative database for employee information in the LMS.

All demographic user profile information in the LMS updates when we receive PAID data. If an Administrator adds a new record to Profile Maintenance prior to the employee's establishment in PAID, the PAID information will overwrite the LMS information. Profile Maintenance is a web interface into the EDR, which is the database that PAID updates.

The primary key between these two databases is the SSN. If an Administrator enters an SSN that differs from what is in PAID, or if HR Service makes a typographical error and enters an incorrect SSN into PAID, two profiles will exist in the LMS (one will have a tie breaker at the end of the UserID). The only information that an LMS Administrator should change directly in the LMS on a User Profile is the password. All other data should update from Profile Maintenance.

III. ITEM MANAGEMENT

Q III-1: Background: Our station Information Security Officer (ISO) asked me to assign the new instructions for Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to all of our employees (VA 1256927, Getting started with public key infrastructure - PKI). I assigned it to everyone with an employee type of 1 using "add Item" under User Needs Management. I did not do an assignment profile because this is an optional class and any new employees will walk through it with the ISO. It is just easier and faster to assign it with the user needs management. I made it optional with no due date.

Problem: It shows up on everyone's learning plan with a due date of 30 days after I assigned it, which is the interval associated with the Item. Even though it is optional, when I look at the back end of their learning plan, since it has a due date, they're getting notifications and they think they have to take it. It looks just like the mandatory classes from the user side.

Q III-1: Can I take the due date out for everyone in one motion? If not, can I unassign it from everyone at once? Or did I remove these options by not doing an assignment profile?

A III-1: Here is how to handle it:

1. Record the original Assignment Date for this Item.
2. Use the User Needs Management Tool to REMOVE the assignment from everyone's Learning Plan (note: will not remove the assignment if the User has already completed).
3. Use the User Needs Management Tool to re-assign the Item using these settings:
   a. Set the Assignment Type to Optional;
   b. Set the Assignment Date to the date recorded in step 1;
   c. CLEAR the Required By Date.

Q III-2: How do I make Items mandatory in the VA LMS?

A III-2: If a particular training is mandatory, an Administrator must assign it to the appropriate users' Learning Plans. There is no way to make an LMS Item mandatory except by assignments. Assignments can be mandatory, but Items cannot be mandatory.

Q III-3: Can Items in the VA LMS have "patient safety" credit hours assigned to them?

A III-3: There is a checkbox entitled "Patient Safety" on each Item. In the past, there was a training requirement for certain disciplines that required devoting a certain number of training hours patient safety issues. Most VAMCs have changed that requirement.

Q III-4: Can users request that additional dates be established for face-to-face Items in the LMS?

A III-4: A checkbox on the Item Record controls the ability to request that additional dates be established for an Item in the LMS. If the box displays as checked, this indicates to users that an Administrator can add additional dates to accommodate their training needs. Users can send email requests for additional dates to the Item Contact directly as part of the registration process.

Q III-5: If an Item has an established prerequisite, can an Administrator override the prerequisite to allow a user to register for a course for which he/she has not taken the prerequisite?

A III-5: If there is a prerequisite for an Item, the LMS will block a user from registering for the 2nd course until the 1st course is completed. However, if the user establishes a registration date for the 1st course AND that date falls prior to the date of the 2nd course the LMS will allow the user to register for the 2nd course. If the user withdraws the registration from the 1st course, the LMS automatically withdraws registration from the 2nd course.

Q III-6: What do we do with Items that used to be in "junk buckets" in TEMPO?

A III-6: A "junk bucket" is a generic name used in the TEMPO application for a groups of training sessions that occurred frequently. Typically, the course name was the same for all occurrences, but the specific title for each course date was different. For example, one site established "Grand Rounds, Nursing Inservices, Satellite Training" as part of its "junk bucket" in order to keep its training listings in TEMPO orderly.

The VA LMS does NOT have a similar functionality. In the LMS, the Item Title and the Scheduled Offering title (date) have to be the same. So, in the LMS, it is best to create separate Items for each occurrence of a particular training that has different names. Administrators can create basic Items, copy them, and update the titles each time sessions occur.

Q III-7: What is the difference between the domain of an Item and the Domain Catalog for an Item?

A III-7: An Item and/or curriculum is viewable by VA LMS users if: it resides in a catalog of LMS Items AND users have access to see that catalog. The designation of which domain the Item belongs to determines which Administrators can manage the Item.

An LMS Administrator can view all Items in the VA LMS through the Administrator interface regardless of the catalog designation, but can only edit those in domains in which he/she has appropriate roles.

IV. TRAIN/STAGE/PRODUCTION INSTANCES

Q IV-1: I am confused about where it is best to practice. Should I practice in either STAGE or TRAIN?

A IV-1: There are three instances: STAGE, TRAIN and TEST. STAGE refreshes at the end of each week. It more resembles production because you actually see Domain resources and information. We recommend STAGE for testing and working out bugs. Complete other practicing in TRAIN, but be forewarned that it refreshes at the end of each month.

Q IV-2: Is there a time delay between creating something in TRAIN and when it becomes available to the User?

A IV-2: For creating, no, but if you are adding an Assignment, a delay occurs. When an Administrator has two windows open (Administrator & User), and he or she makes a change on the Administrator side, that Administrator must refresh the User side in order for the change to be visible.

Q IV-3: I cannot find something I created TRAIN.

A IV-3: TRAIN refreshes at the end of each month. The refresh affects NEW passwords. Tip: Log in to Production/Stage/Train as Administrator and User at the same time when changing the Network Password.

V. ADD HOC NOTIFICATIONS

Q V-1: Regarding Ad Hoc notifications, can you enter more than one e-mail address in the field indicating where to send copies? The help page says you can enter more than one e-mail address separated by commas, but when I tried that, I couldn't make it work.

A V-1: So far, we have been unable to string together multiple email addresses separated by either commas or semi-colons. We suggest using a group email as the work-around. In the interim, we are working with Plateau to fix this discrepancy.

VI. PAID

Q VI-1: PAID takes several weeks to make an interdepartmental transfer (VBA-VHA) visible in VA LMS. Other than asking Sharon McCormick to manually transport the User to the new domain, what is the best way to handle this?

A VI-1: First, let's review the relationships between the PAID feed, EDR and Profile Maintenance.

PAID is the authoritative database the VA users to collect organization and demographic information on employees. The rule is that the EDR/LMS accepts the information in PAID and if the information is not correct, local HR must correct the information.

EDR is the database that has tables for all LMS Users and reference tables for organizations and facilities plus other information to support the LMS.

Profile Maintenance (PM) is the web interface that allows LMS Administrators to Add/Edit User information.

- Only staff members who have a business need to manage their domain users have access to PM;
- Domains in users' hierarchies dictate access to PM. For example, an Administrator at the St. Pete Regional Office cannot see user profiles in the Baltimore Regional Office.

If a user transfers from VBA to VHA two actions occur in PAID:

- The VBA facility Administrator separates the employee from his or her site;
- The VHA facility Administrator picks up the employee.

Now, let's address the question:

If you can wait until the PAID processes the transfer, please do. The processing will seamlessly change the domain, organization, T&L Unit of the employee.

It is true that these to HR actions can take several weeks to process, so if you have a new employee reporting for duty that has transferred from another facility, please send an email to the VA LMS Help Desk at valmshelp@va.gov or contact by phone at (866) 496-0463.

The Help Desk can see users in all of the domains. A technician will be able to go into Profile Maintenance and move necessary profiles to your domain (be prepared to direct the technician to which organization/business line at your facility the transported profiles need to go). The Help Desk will change the Employee Type from "Employee" which will from PAID to "Extended Leave/Military Leave".

There is a known problem with the process: if the losing station separates an employee prior to the gaining station adding the employee, the employee's User Profile becomes marked as inactive. O&M has a made a recommendation to the VA LMS User group to handle transfers much the same way as we handle new employees in the LMS: once the transferring employee's record becomes identified as a transfer and changes domains, the EDR will not update the LMS for the following 30 days or until the record changes in PAID.