

UIF eDecs Made Simple Webinar hosted by BUSA on 13 August 2024

Thank you to the UIF colleagues Nomalan Pillay and Alta Du Plessis for their time and sharing their expertise with the more than 200 delegates who attended. Following the session and based on some of the questions posed in the chat, please find herewith a brief Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that seeks to provide clarity on these common queries.

More detailed information is contained in the attached presentations as shared by the UIF in the session. For those interested, access to the recording is available using the Zoom link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/xAKBXEt-ZfZ9_WrSdoEVSynGTtFF1L-cMwZUn34IUNJEtGC6xCO5u9_XVd4DvdR_8HicAMUDwP69FfMd

and inserting the passcode: **Z!D4G+hj**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is it sufficient to make declarations via SARS on the EMP201?

No. This is the process to make UI contributions. SARS collects the UI contributions from the employer monthly and pays across to the UIF. However, this is a lumpsum, recorded against the employer's UIF reference number but does not provide detailed information per employee.

Employers are required to additionally submit, by the 7th of each month, a detailed declaration that includes all the individual employee information including earnings, contributions, employment status, etc. This must be done either by eDecs (payroll) or uFiling.

What is eDecs?

eDecs, short for e-Declarations, is the process of submitting a payroll-generated report, that is compliant with the various data points and formats required by UIF, which is then emailed through to the UIF monthly.

Your payroll system should have the facility to prepare an eDecs file, in the prescribed format, which must then be emailed to declaration@labour.gov.za by the 7th of each month.

What is the right email address to submit eDecs?

The UIF accepts emails to either declaration@labour.gov.za or declarations@labour.gov.za.

It is imperative that your subject line only reads "Declarations" or "Declaration". Any other narrative will not be picked up by the automated system/workflow and will result in your declaration being ignored.

Can an employer submit multiple files in a single eDecs email?

No. Only a single file, correctly named (using the UIF reference number and unique file number) must be submitted per email. Submission of multiple files risks the entire submission being rejected.

Will the employer receive a response from UIF confirming receipt of my file?

No. The email inbox does not respond to confirm receipt. However, once the file has been processed by the Siyaya system, the email address contained in the eDecs file will receive an

email which confirms the status of the process, including how many employee records were successfully processed. It is imperative that this email is reviewed to ensure that the correct number of employee records was processed and successfully uploaded, and where issues were highlighted, the corrected records are resubmitted for processing.

How can an employer check their declaration records on Siyaya?

Presently there is no way to check this as an employer. This is currently under consideration/development by UIF, and further information will be shared in due course.

Employers are encouraged to review their monthly submission return email from UIF and to verify that the employee records numbers tally.

We don't receive emails, why?

The email address that the UIF utilizes for correspondence is contained in two separate areas in the eDecs file. This information must be accurate to ensure that you receive information, including confirmation of successful completion or notification of corrective action required.

This information is part of the settings on your payroll system. Connect with your payroll provider for support or update manually when checking the eDecs file in Notepad before emailing to UIF.

We receive confirmation of our eDecs from UIF, but we are told there are missing declarations, how does this happen?

The data formatting of the eDecs file is paramount. Any mistake can result in some/all of the declaration information being discarded by the UIF's system. It is critical to review the payroll generated eDecs file before submission.

This is best done via Notepad (application) and formatting specifics are contained for reference in the attached Advocacy presentation.

Remember too that the file must be received as "Live" because if sent in "Test" format, it will be rejected outright.

What is uFiling?

uFiling is a web-based platform designed to support domestic and small employers. It is a separate system to Siyaya and eDecs. Employers who use uFiling will be required to manually upload employee declarations monthly and it is therefore recommended that employers using a payroll system opt rather to use eDecs which is far less time-consuming and admin intensive.

Can Foreign Nationals be declared via eDecs?

No. The Siyaya system, to which eDecs automates, requires a 13-digit ID number to record declarations information. Therefore, if you have a Foreign National employee, you are required to separately register and declare them via uFiling as this system has been designed to accept a passport or asylum-seeker number.

It goes without saying, all Foreign National employees must be in possession of valid working permits. UIF reserves the right too request documentation to support authentication/verification.

Is it acceptable to submit declarations via eDecs and uFiling?

For employers of South Africans only, there should be no need to use both systems. Those using a payroll system are encouraged to only use eDecs. Those without a payroll system, and who have less than 50 employees, can use the uFiling web platform to make monthly manual submissions.

Where an employer has both South African and Foreign National employees, they should submit South African employee declarations via eDecs and then manually upload only the Foreign National employee declarations via uFiling.

Why can an employer/employee not see their declarations on uFiling when the employer does eDecs submission each month?

Siyaya database and the uFiling system are separate systems.

The uFiling system is a one-way data input. Data captured in uFiling will be viewable on uFiling and is submitted to UIF for inclusion in the Siyaya database. Declarations submitted via eDecs are stored in the main Siyaya database but are *not pulled backwards* into uFiling.

Can an employer submit more than one payroll file (eDec) in a month for the same UI reference?

Yes, but you should be careful, understanding that conflicting information will create problems. File naming references (especially unique file names) will determine how the UIF system processes the information. The last file information will be retained and used, therefore declarations for the month should be complete.

In the case of submission of an ad hoc eDecs file mid-month, for example, to support employees who have been terminated/gone on maternity leave during the month, this same data should be included in the usual month-end declaration file to ensure that the UIF's records are maintained.

If an employee starts on the 25th of the month, for example, and their first pay period is only the next month, what should we do with that first month's declaration?

The UIF requires complete records and will consider the start month to be a declaration requirement. If no earnings are paid in this period, the employer should indicate "0" earnings and this will create a "0" contributions record for that month.

What happens if an employee is terminated this month, but will receive income (leave, commission, deferred earnings etc.) in the next month? How does an employer complete the declaration?

The termination date must be included in the declaration in the month in which the termination took place. This termination date must also be recorded (with no changes) in the subsequent months where payment is made to the employee. This should not negatively impact the employee's opportunity to claim, providing the termination date and termination code are included and remain unchanged.

Sometimes, UIF may require the employer to confirm the nature of these payments to ensure that the claim is still valid.

How quickly are eDecs processed?

The UIF begins processing eDecs from 7th of each month when declarations begin arriving in the inbox, however due to volume, processing can take up to three (3) weeks to finalise. Employers are therefore encouraged, in the case of high-volume terminations (e.g. retrenchments) to advise the UIF of that fact so that these files can be prioritized for processing and to support timeous unemployment insurance applications.

For employees, e.g. maternity or illness, who “terminate” mid-month, the UIF recommends that the employer sends an ad hoc declaration, for the impacted employees, ASAP so that this information can be processed when it comes in. Remember however that these employees *must also be included in the standard declaration made at the end of that month*, with no changes to the data.

Is it compulsory to have a start and termination date for employees on maternity leave?

Yes! All employees must have a start date included in their declaration file.

Any employee who is “terminated”, including those on maternity or unpaid illness leave, will need to have a termination date which indicates the date on which they began their leave. This information must be included in EVERY declaration for the months in which this leave continues. Once the employee returns to work, there will be no termination date required.

Are manual UI-19 forms still required?

The UIF is trying to move towards electronic documentation as this has less risk related to fraud and also delays in processing. Employers are encouraged to use eDecs (or for smaller employers, uFiling) to update the UIF of employees’ termination, including maternity/illness etc.

Labour Centres will accept manual UI-19 forms as well, to ensure that all beneficiaries are able to make a claim.

How should forms be completed? There is conflicting information given by different UI officials and labour centres?

It was agreed that a separate webinar, focused on completion of UI forms, will be set up in the coming weeks to provide detailed insight into the information required, including formatting, and the associated documentation need to complete a claim.

Why do employers have to complete Salary Schedules?

Ideally, this should not be required. If all declarations are updated (for past four years minimum) there is no need for an employer to provide additional information in the form of a salary schedule.

To save themselves the hassle, employers are encouraged to ensure that all declarations are complete and fully updated.