

# TOOLS

TOOLS is an acronym for the 'TimeTabler **O**ptions **O**n-Line **S**ystem'.

This is a system to allow parents/students to select their optional subject Choices on-line, using the internet instead of the traditional paper method.

Apart from looking more modern, this method means that you don't have to type the students' choices into **Options** – the parents/students do it for you.

In order to use this system, you may need the assistance of your IT Manager.

A MySQL database and some PHP files have to be placed on the school's Web-Server so that the parents/students can gain access. *Alternatively*, the system can be hosted for you for a nominal fee, see more details at: [http://www.studentoptions.co/student\\_options.html](http://www.studentoptions.co/student_options.html)

We provide the MySQL and PHP files, with documentation explaining how to install them.

When you click on the TOOLS button in **Options** it shows you this screen:

**T.O.O.L.S.**

**TOOLS (TimeTabler Options On-Line System) - for the on-line collection of Students' Choices**

**Setting-Up TOOLS**

**Step 1:** Read the Overview of how TOOLS works: **TOOLS Overview & Manual**

**Step 2:** Install TOOLS on your web-server (you will need the help of your IT Manager for this): **How to Install TOOLS**

**Prepare & Export your Students to TOOLS**

**Step 3:** Set-up your Students (and other Parameters): **Setup Students & Parameters**

**Step 4:** Export the information to TOOLS: **Export Students ...** **Export Subjects ...**

**Step 5:** (Then Import these files into TOOLS by logging-in as Admin, and using the Admin Control Panel).

**Students (and Parents) make their Choices**

**Step 6:** Send letters to students & parents: **Print Letters** or create your own letter with: **Mail Merge**

**Step 7:** (Each Student should now login to TOOLS on-line from their own PC/laptop and make their choices).

**Import back from TOOLS**

When your students have finished entering their choices into TOOLS, you need to **import** those choices back into Options:

**Step 8:** Import the Choices file: **Import Student Choices from TOOLS ...**

**Step 9:** (Check the imported Choices and then continue as usual to build a Pattern manually or with Auto-Create).

More about TOOLS **Close**


Step 1 in the screen above is this document.

Step 2 gives full details of how to install the PHP files with a MySQL database, but see page 13.

This document takes you through Steps 3 – 9 of the list above.

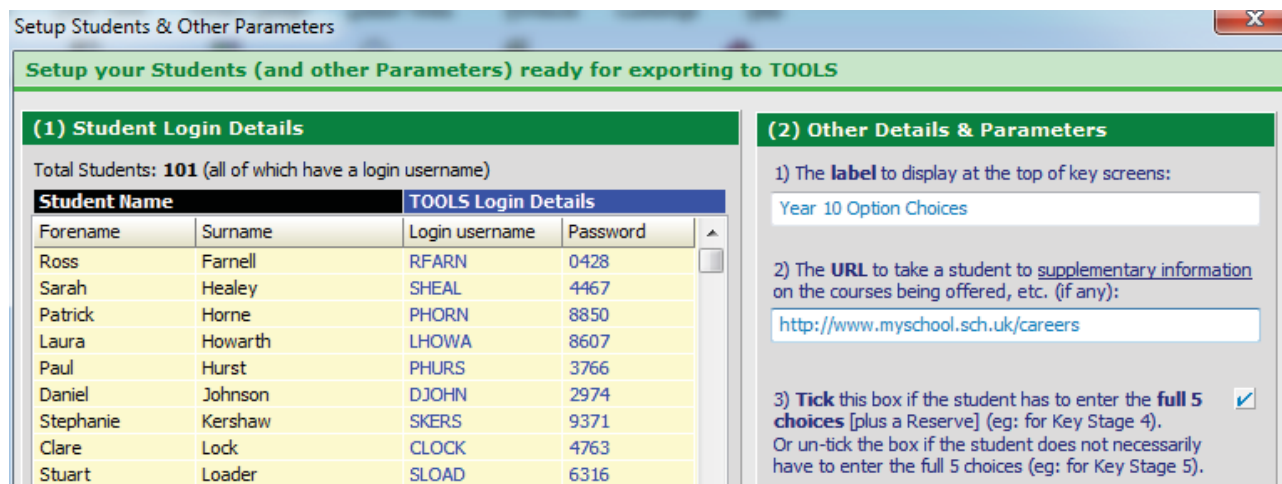
Before starting we suggest you read pages 6 - 7 so you know which model you are aiming for.

### Step 3

Click on the  button on the TOOLS Screen (shown on the previous page).

The Students in the current population (that you have previously entered or imported into **Options**) are shown in a list, together with a UserName and a Password/PIN generated by **Options**.

If the username and password columns are empty then click on: 



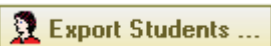
Student Name		TOOLS Login Details	
Forename	Surname	Login username	Password
Ross	Farnell	RFARN	0428
Sarah	Healey	SHEAL	4467
Patrick	Horne	PHORN	8850
Laura	Howarth	LHOWA	8607
Paul	Hurst	PHURS	3766
Daniel	Johnson	DJOHN	2974
Stephanie	Kershaw	SKERS	9371
Clare	Lock	CLOCK	4763
Stuart	Loader	SLOAD	6316

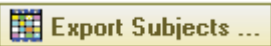
Their UserName and Password/PIN will be given to each Student/Parent (see Step 5 below), and then used by them to access the on-line system (see Step 6 below). (This username and password are created by **Options** for this purpose only and bear no relation to any existing passwords.)

At the right-hand side you can enter:

- A Label that will be displayed at the top of the screens that the students/parents will visit, so that they are sure which students these option choices apply to.  
*For example, 'Year 10 Option Choices' or 'Lower Sixth Option Choices'.*
- The URL of any web-page/portal that you think would be helpful to show the students/parents.  
*For example, your school's IAG/Careers site for this age-group, or a government web-site such as: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>*  
This customizable hyperlink allows you to customize TOOLS for your school.
- Specify whether the student has to enter the full specified Number of choices (eg. for Key Stage 4) or not necessarily the full number (eg. for Key Stage 5).

### Step 4

Click on the  button on the TOOLS Screen (shown on the previous page). This exports the Name, UserName, and password/PIN of each **Student** to a file, ready for you to import that data into the TOOLS on-line system (see Step 5, starting on the next page).

Click also on the  button. This exports the list of **Subjects** on offer to a file, ready for you to import into the TOOLS on-line system (see Step 5 starting on the next page).

## Step 5

Now access the TOOLS system in your browser, by typing the correct URL (for example: [www.myschool.sch.uk/tools](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/tools)). You will see the Log-in Screen:

Please enter your details:

Username:

Password:

TOOLS 2013 [ver 2.0] (c) October Resolutions 2011-2013 www.timetabler.com

On the first occasion that you visit, enter the defaults :      Username: admin  
 Password: password

This gives you access to the **Control Panel**:

**Admin Control Panel** [Log out](#)

**Admin**

- 1 [Change the Admin password](#) for security
- 2 [Set up Email confirmation](#) to parents/students
- 3 [Set up a Question](#) to ask parents/students

**Set up**

- 4 [Import the Students](#) from a file provided by *TT-Options*
- 5 [Import the Subjects to be offered](#) from a file provided by *TT-Options*
- 6 [Set up/Change "Choose One" sections](#) **NEW**

**View**

- 7 [The list of Students](#)  
You can see who has made their Choices (so far), or allow a student to re-do his/her Choices
- 8 [The Subjects being offered to the students](#)  
Including the 'popularity' of each subject (so far)
- 9 [The Subjects that have been chosen by each student](#)  
Including the 'progress' (so far)

**Export**

- 10 [Export the Students' Choices](#) to a file needed by *TT-Options*

Checks & Tasks:  
[\[Help\]](#)   [\[Password reminder\]](#)   [\[PHP info\]](#)   [\[Test email\]](#)   [\[Enable/Disable TOOLS\]](#)

continued

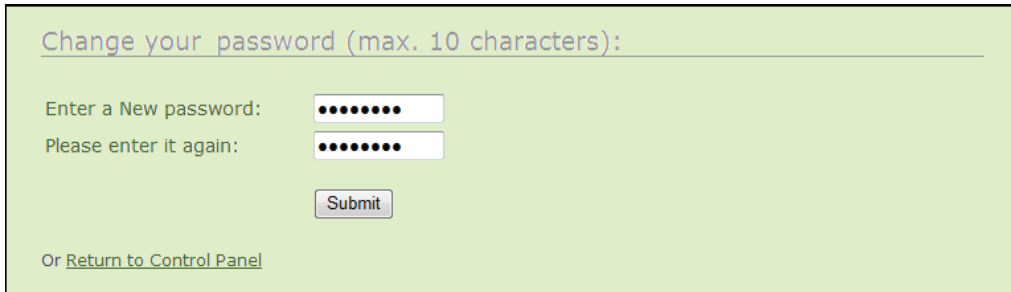
# The Control Panel

## Admin

### Section 1

This allows you to change your password if you wish.

The default password is 'password'. (The user-name is always 'admin'.)



Change your password (max. 10 characters):

Enter a New password:

Please enter it again:

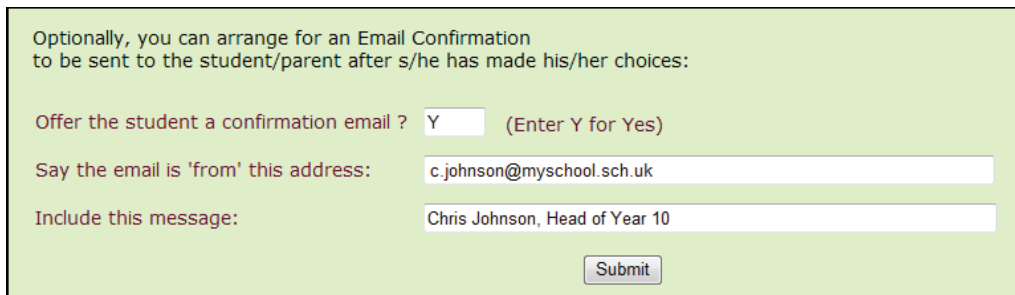
Or [Return to Control Panel](#)

### Section 2

This allows you to offer the Parent/Student an Email confirming their Choices [at the end of Step 7]. If you decide to offer this, you'll need to set up the message as shown below.

We suggest you view this message during Testing [see page 9] before deciding on any changes.

The sample screen below shows some suggestions for the entries:



Optionally, you can arrange for an Email Confirmation to be sent to the student/parent after s/he has made his/her choices:

Offer the student a confirmation email ?  (Enter Y for Yes)

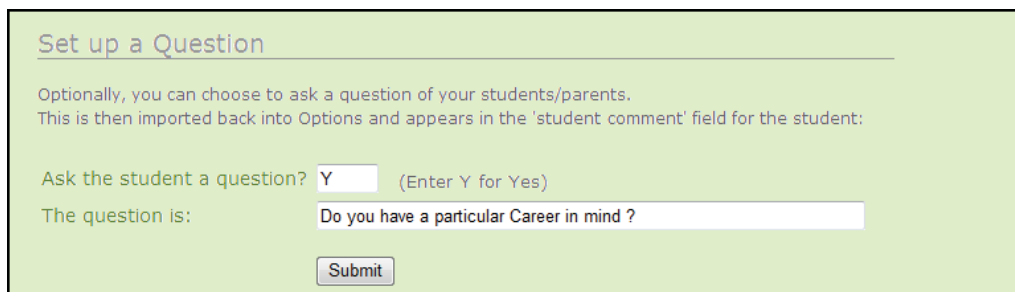
Say the email is 'from' this address:

Include this message:

### Section 3

This allows you to specify a Question that will be put to the student/parent immediately after they have made their choices. If you decide to offer this, you'll need to set up the message see below.

We suggest you view this message during Testing [see page 9] to check what it looks like.



Set up a Question

Optionally, you can choose to ask a question of your students/parents. This is then imported back into Options and appears in the 'student comment' field for the student:

Ask the student a question?  (Enter Y for Yes)

The question is:

Messages might be like:

“Do you have a particular Career in mind?”

“Will you be returning in the Sixth Form next year?”

continued...

### Section 4

Use this to load in the file of Students' Names that you produced in **Options** at Step 4 above. The file that you need to load in is called TOOLS\_Students.txt

#### Importing the list of Students in this population

To import the Students, you need a file that is exported from **TT-Options**. The name of this file is : **TOOLS\_Students.txt**

You may have this file on this machine or on a memorystick.

Use the browse button to find this file:

File of Students :



### Section 5

Then do similarly to load in the Subjects that are being offered to these students. The file that you need to load in is called TOOLS\_Offered\_Subjects.txt

#### Importing the Subjects to be offered

To import the Subjects that are to be offered to the students, you need a file that is exported from **TT-Options**. The name of this file is : **TOOLS\_Offered\_Subjects.txt**

You may have this file on this machine or on a memorystick.

Use the browse button to find this file:

File of Subjects :



At this stage the Students' Names, and the Subjects you are offering them, have been entered into the TOOLS System.

If you have only Free Choices then it is ready for the Students/Parents to enter their Choices. However we strongly recommend that you **test** the system first, see the panel on page 9.

If you want to set up some 'Choose ONE' sections, these are explained on the next spread.

continued...



## Set up continued. Section 6 Setting up 'Choose ONE' sections (optional)

### Model A

By default, if you do nothing in this Section 6, your students/parents are given a single Free-Choice List to enter their Choices, via 1, 2, 3... (with a Reserve Choice if you've allowed that).

For example, students/parents may see:

See also page 11 for a bigger picture.

**Step 1 of 2**  
[Start](#) > Free form entry (with reserve) > Confirmation  
 Please enter your 5 choices (1,2,3, etc) in the box for that subject:  
**To mark your Reserve choice, put 'R' by that subject.**

Subject	Choice
Art (Art)	2
German (De)	
Drama (Dr)	4
French (Fr)	1

### Model B

You can use Section 6 of the Admin Panel to set up an alternative "Choose ONE" List. ie. a group of subjects listed, from which students/parents must choose ONE and only ONE.

For example, if you specify only 1 subject choice for this Population in **Options**, and then specify 1 section in this Section 6 then you'd see a screen like:

Set up / Change "Choose one" sections You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects	Closing sentence
Choose ONE of the following Languages:	German Spanish	This is the language you will study in Year 8, in addition to French.

There will be no Free Choices.

[Edit](#)

and the students/parents would then see:

In this example the students are choosing a second MFL to study in Year 8.

The 'Header' (before) and the 'Closing' (after) sentences say whatever you choose to type.

**Step 1 of 2**  
[Start](#) > Choice 1 > Confirmation

**Choose ONE of the following Languages:**

German (De)  Spanish (Sp)

This is the language you will study in Year 8, in addition to French. [Next](#)

### Model C

You can mix the two styles. For example, you can set up the Population in **Options** with 4 Choices and then use section 6 in the TOOLS Admin Panel to set up 1 "Choose ONE" section, like this:

Set up / Change "Choose one" sections You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects	Closing sentence
Choose ONE of the following Humanities Subjects:	Geography History	If you don't choose History here you can choose it later.

There will also be 3 Free Choices, for the Student to select at the end.

The student will be presented with this list of free choice subjects:

Art	Food Technology	History	P.E.
Child Dev'ment	French	Info Technology	Spanish
Drama	Graphics	Music	Materials Tech

In this example the students/parents would see, on-line,

- first, a "Choose ONE" screen, like the one shown in Model B above, then
- second, a Free Choice screen, like the one shown in Model A above.

In this example we have chosen History to appear in the "Choose ONE" section and also in the Free Choice list, while Geography doesn't. If you could afford another Geography group then it might say "If you don't choose History, or Geography, here you can choose it later." (You can have neither, some, or all, depending on which groups you can staff).

For EBacc, you might set up 2 "Choose ONE" sections (Humanities, MFL) and the rest Free Choice.

## Model D

You can have several "Choose ONE" sections, one after the other, with no Free Choice sections at all.

**Example 1 :** In a school that always keeps to Fixed Option Blocks/Columns, and wants to use TOOLS to find out how big each of the fixed groups will be this year.

And then perhaps use the Review & Counsel Screen in **Options** to counsel students and adjust the group sizes.

**Example 2 :** In an International Baccalaureate (IB) school which wants to offer the 6 subject areas to its students so that they select only one subject from each area. In this case, for IB, the set up in the Admin Panel might look like this:

### Set up / Change "Choose one" sections

You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects	Closing sentence	
Choose ONE of the following Group 1 subjects:	French Lit SL Lang+Lit HL Lang+Lit SL	Literature HL Lit & Perf SL Literature SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL) and 3 at Higher Level (HL).
Choose ONE of the following Group 2 subjects:	French HL French SL Italian SL	Latin SL Spanish HL Spanish SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 3 subjects:	Economics SL Geography HL Geography SL	History HL History SL Psychology SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 4 subjects:	Biology HL Biology SL Chemistry HL Chemistry SL	Physics HL Physics SL DesignTech SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 5 subjects:	Maths SL Maths HL	MathsStudies SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Finally, choose ONE of the following Subjects:	Spanish HL Spanish SL Economics SL Biology HL Biology SL	Chemistry HL Chemistry SL Film SL Music SL Theatre SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.

There will be no Free Choices.

[Edit](#)

and then the Students/Parents would see, as the first of 6 screens:

T.O.O.L.S >>

TimeTabler  
Options  
StaffCover

www.timetabler.com

Laura Norder High School      Grade 12 : International Baccalaureate

To leave without making any choices: [Log out](#)

**Choices for: Sarah Healey**

**Extra information:**    Click [here](#) for an example.    Click [here](#) for course information.

**Step 1 of 7**

[Start](#) > Choice 1 > Choice 2 > Choice 3 > Choice 4 > Choice 5 > Choice 6 > Confirmation

**Choose ONE of the following Group 1 subjects:**

French Lit SL (FrLit)

Lang+Lit HL (LaLiS)

Lang+Lit SL (LaLit)

Literature HL (LiH)

Lit & Perf SL (LitPer)

Literature SL (LitS)

In total you must choose 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL) and 3 at Higher Level (HL).

[Next](#)

**Section 7**

Click in Section 7 to see a List of the Students you have loaded. The screen also has a column that shows whether they have yet made their Choices [see 'Patrick Horne', below]:

List of Students					
Name	Chosen?	Choices	Class	Username	
* Ross Farnell	* No	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	RFARN	
* Sarah Healey	* No	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	SHEAL	
Patrick Horne	Yes-30/11/11 16:01	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	PHORN	
* Laura Howarth	* No	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	LHOWA	
* Paul Hurst	* No	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	PHURS	
* Daniel Johnson	* No	<a href="#">Undo</a> <a href="#">View</a>	9C	DJOHN	

On this screen you can also 'Undo' their Choices if, for example, the student/parent says that they made a mistake and they want to re-do the selection. (TOOLS will not allow them to make their Choices a second time unless you use this 'Undo'.) Click on 'View' to see a student's password.

**Section 8**

This screen shows you the Subjects that are on offer to these students.

List of Subjects							
Subject No.	Abbreviation	Name	Popularity	1	2	3	4
1	Art	Art	2	0	1	1	0
2	CD	Child Dev'ment	0	0	0	0	0
3	De	German	1	0	0	0	1
4	Dr	Drama	2	0	1	0	1
5	Fr	French	3	2	0	1	0
6	Es	Food Technology	0	0	0	0	0

The right-hand columns show the number of students who have chosen each Subject (so far) and whether they have chosen them as their 1st/2nd/3rd/4th preference.

**Section 9**

This screen shows you the Choices that the students/parents have made, with any comments. You can easily see who has not yet made their Choices, and needs chivvying/reminding.

Students and their Choices/Electives:						
* Ross Farnell						
* Sarah Healey						
Patrick Horne	I want to be a Doctor.	1=Fr	2=Art	3=Gg	4=Dr	R=Hi
* Laura Howarth						
* Paul Hurst						
* Daniel Johnson						


Before allowing student/parents to use the system we strongly recommend that you **test** the system, as explained on the next page.



## Testing the TOOLS System

After making any changes to the data, the files or the set-up and before sending out the letters to Parents [step 6, on the next page] **we strongly recommend** that you test the system with a few test entries, as follows:

### 1.

In **Options**, on the TOOLS Screen, click on  to see your Students with their UserName & Password/PIN [see Step 3 above].  
Make a note of one or two UserNames, with their Password/PIN.

### 2.

In your browser enter the URL to see the on-line TOOLS Log-in Screen [see Step 5 above].  
Now pretend to be one of your Students, by entering their UserName & Password/PIN, as noted above.

You will now see the List of Subjects on offer [see Step 7 below], with 2 hyperlinks above.

- Test these hyperlinks first [the second one is the hyperlink that you entered in Step 3].
- Check that the correct Subjects are shown.

Select some subjects as though you are the student.

Add 'R' if you specified (in **Options**) that a Reserve Choice is needed.

Make a note of your Choices.

Click on the 'Submit' button.

- Check that the correct Choices are shown, in the correct priority order.

If you are also asked a Question (see section 3) enter an answer.

Click the 'Confirm Choices' button.

If you switched on 'Email Confirmation' in the Control Panel [page 4], click on 'Request an email confirmation' and enter your email address, then 'Submit'.

- When the email arrives, look at the message and see if you want to Edit it in the Control Panel [see page 4].

Repeat for another student if you wish to be sure.

### 3.

Now Log-in again, this time using the Administrator's Username & Password, as in Step 5 above, to see the Control Panel.

On the Control Panel select Section 7 and/or Section 9, and look at the details for the students that you pretended to be.

- Check that the Choices are shown correctly.

Finally, enter Section 7 and click on '**Undo**' to re-set the Students that you pretended to be.

If all has gone well you are now ready to send out to Parents their UserName & Password/PIN, using the letter shown on the next page.

#### Note:

If you have two (or more) populations, for example one for Year 10 Options and one for Lower 6th Options, then you should install TOOLS in two different folders on your web-server and run them separately. (But you only need one copy of **Options** to export to and import from ...just move between the populations in **Options** as you would normally.)

## Step 6

In **Options**, on the TOOLS Screen, click on



On this screen click **Preview** to refresh the screen after each change you make.

You can choose the font, and whether to print one or two letters per sheet.

- ① Enter the Date, which will appear at the top of the letter, as shown above.
- ② Enter the URL that the parents/students must enter into their browser to access the system. This is the location where your IT Manager has installed the php files that we provided. *For example, [www.myschool.sch.uk/options](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/options) or [www.myschool.sch.uk/year10](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/year10)* Make sure this address is accurate [and simple].
- ③ You can enter an optional message, of up to 3 lines, if you wish. *For example, if you are providing a separate sheet of paper about any Rules that they must follow [eg. 'You must choose at least one Foreign Language'] then you can enter a message here. Eg. "See also the enclosed guidance sheet." Perhaps you should give a closing date/deadline. Alternatively, if your letter (above) fits into the top half of the A4 sheet, then after printing them you could pass them through a photocopier to add your Rules to the lower half of the sheet.*
- ④ Enter a signature, which will probably be seen as the point of contact if they have any queries.

Make a single 'Test' printout, and if all is OK then untick the box, print all the sheets, and send home.

You will need to consider the security issues here: will the letters need to be posted directly to the parents, or could they be given to students without getting lost?

**Note 1 :** Make sure you follow any local data-protection rules. In the UK you are responsible for ensuring that the rules of the GDPR are applied.

**Note 2 :** As in all on-line systems there is the possibility of 'fraud'. If you give the student the letter to take home, but s/he loses it, then a stranger or class-mate could maliciously enter the student's Choices. The student/parent and you would be unaware of this ...though you could chivvy students regularly (eg. in Assembly) that they or their parents should be entering their Choices. And after Step 10 you can use the 'Mail-Merge' feature in **Options** to inform parents of the final Choices and which block each Subject is in ...but finding an error at that stage may be too late.

## Step 7

When the Parents receive the letter that you composed and printed at Step 6, they will know:

- the URL that they should type into their browser,
- the UserName and Password/PIN for this student,
- an explanation of what they have to do.

When they type the URL in their browser they will see the Log-in Screen shown in Step 5 above.

When they enter the correct User Name & Password/PIN they will see a Choices Screen.

For example, if you set up just a Free Choices Screen as in Model A on page 6:

Laura Norder High School Year 10 Option Choices

**Choices for: Melanie Owen 9C**

**Extra information:** Click [here](#) for an example. Click [here](#) for course information.

**Step 1**

[Start](#) > Free form entry (with reserve) > Confirmation

Please enter your 5 choices (1,2,3,etc) in the box for that subject:  
To mark your Reserve Choice, put 'R' by that Subject

Subject	Choice
Art (Art)	2
German (De)	
Drama (Dr)	4
French (Fr)	1

In this case they should enter '1' against their First Choice, a '2' against their Second Choice, etc. If you have specified in **Options** that you want a Reserve Choice, then they should enter an '**R**' against this Reserve Subject. This is illustrated on the [Example](#) that the parents can view.

When they have entered their Choices they are asked to click on the Submit button.

The Choices are summarised for them:

Please check your Subjects and if they are correct, click 'Confirm Choices'

**Name: Melanie Owen**  
**Class: 9C**  
**Username: MOWEN**

Choice No.	Subject chosen
1	French
2	Art
3	History
4	Drama
R	Food Technology

If you specified a Question in Section 3 (page 4) then it is asked here.

When they click on 'Confirm Choices' the data is stored.

If you decided to set up an Email Confirmation [see page 4] then they are offered a clickable link, and if they accept then they are asked to enter their email address.

At any stage you can monitor the progress as parents/students select their Choices, by using the screen shown in Sections 7 or 9 of the Control Panel.

## Step 8

When you are sure that **all** the students have entered their Choices (see Section 7 or 9 on the Control Panel), then you need to transfer the data from the TOOLS System to the **Options** software.

Type the URL in your browser to go to the Log-In Screen [see Step 5 above].

Enter your UserName & Password/PIN [as in Step 5 above] to enter the Control Panel.

Go to Section 10 of the Control Panel and click on the link:

to go to the Export Screen:

**Export**

10 [Export the Students' Choices](#) to a file needed by **TT-Options**

---

### Exporting the Choices for this population

This will export your Choices to the file "TOOLS\_Choices.txt"  
You can then import this file into **TT-Options**.

[Export Choices](#)

---

### Choices now saved

**The file 'TOOLS\_Choices.txt' has now been created.**

You may have been prompted to download the file to your PC (or memory stick).  
Or the file may have been downloaded automatically to your computer's 'downloads' folder.

When you have done this, you get a message about saving the file called Tools\_Choices.txt

Check that the file has been saved on your PC or on a memorystick.

Then go into the **Options** program, and enter the TOOLS Screen [as shown on page 1].

At Step 8 click the [Import Student Choices from TOOLS ...](#) button.

Follow the 3 steps shown below to load the collected data into **Options**:

Import Choices from TOOLS on-line

**Step 1: Select the file to import from:**

[find file](#) M:\TOOLS\_Choices.txt

**Step 2: Preview the Students' Choices:**

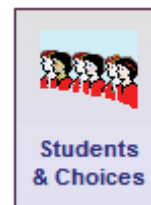
[Preview File >](#)

Student	Ch-1	Ch-2	Ch-3	Ch-4	Ch-5	Res
Ross Farnell	Mu	De	Art	Fo	Gg	Hi
Sarah Healey	CD	Dr	Fo	Gg	IT	Fr
Patrick Horne	IT	Sp	Dr	Fo	Art	Gg
Laura Howarth	Fr	Fo	Gg	Art	Hi	Mu
Paul Hurst	Fo	PE	CD	Art	Dr	Gg

**Step 3:** [Import the Choices](#) [Cancel](#)

The Choices that the Parents/Students entered in their web-browsers are now in **Options**, ready for you to construct the best Pattern, either interactively or using Auto-Create.

## Step 9



When you go to the Students & Choices Screen in **Options** you should now see that all the Students have a complete set of Subject Choices.

If you posed a question (see section 3, page 4) and they answered it, their answer will appear in the 'Student Comment' box.

If you have any Students who joined the school after you set up the list of Students in the TOOLS System, then you need to add their Names and their Choices to this screen now. Similarly if any students return their Choices on paper for some reason.

### Rules

If you have set up any Rules on this screen, or if you set up any Rules now, then **Options** will show you which Students have broken those Rules. See page 19 of the **Options** Handbook.

Once you are satisfied with the data that you have got, you can move ahead,

- to the Clash Table [see page 22 in the **Options** Handbook],
- and then build a good Pattern, either interactively or using Auto-Create [pages 23-39].

When you have completed the process, and achieved a good Pattern, then you can use the Mail-Merge feature in **Options** to send a letter home to Parents, so that they know the final outcome. This is particularly important if you don't achieve 100% satisfaction or have to use Reserve choices. See page 48 in the **Options** Handbook.

If you have any questions or suggestions for TOOLS, please let us know at: [support@timetabler.com](mailto:support@timetabler.com)

# FAQS

## 1. Can I link the TOOLS system to my school's IAG/Careers web-site?

Yes, on the Students/Parents Screen [see page 11] there are 2 hyperlinks, which link to 2 simple HTML web-pages.

The first of these [[TOOLS-Example1.html](#)] is an example which you may wish to leave largely intact (though you could add a note such as "*Please ensure you read the A4 sheet(s) that we sent you. It explains some Rules that you need to follow.*").

The second link may be more useful to you. By default it links to a sample page [[courseinfo.html](#)], but you can replace this by your own page(s). The easiest way is to change the hyperlink by entering the new hyperlink on the **Options** screen shown at Step 3 on page 2 [part 2].

This new page could be a 'portal' page with many links on it, perhaps one for each subject, as well as links to IAG/Careers advice.

Be very careful if you are tempted to change any other TOOLS files. Most of them contain some php code, and if you change this we cannot be held responsible for the results.

After any changes please make sure that you test the system carefully [see page 9].

## 2. How do I handle multiple populations? We usually have 3 populations: Y9→Y10, Y11→12 and also a parallel Y11→12 population so I can collect provisional choices early in the year.

You need to install TOOLS in 3 different folders on your webserver and run them separately.

For example, you might have:

[www.myschool.sch.uk/year10](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/year10),

[www.myschool.sch.uk/year12](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/year12), and

[www.myschool.sch.uk/year12provisional](http://www.myschool.sch.uk/year12provisional)

But you still only need one copy of **Options**, of course, to export from and import to ... with three populations ... then just move between the populations in **Options** as you would normally.

## 3. What's the best way to handle the deadline?

At Step 6 we've suggested that you include a deadline date in your letter to parents.

As the deadline date approaches you can go to Section 7 of the Admin Panel (see page 8) to see who still needs to be chivvied to make their choices.

Then when the deadline date arrives you can go to the Admin Panel (see page 3), and at the bottom select **[Enable/Disable TOOLS]**. Enter X in the box to disable TOOLS and enter a message to be shown to any student/parent that tries to log in.

## 4. How do I handle students who join the school late, or who can only reply on paper?

When you import the choices back into **Options**, they overwrite all existing choices for all students. This also means that if a student has not made any choices in TOOLS, then after importing he will have no choices in **Options** either; any existing choices he had before importing will be lost.

[The Students & Choices Screen in **Options** shows you clearly who is outstanding.]

So if some students are returning their choices on paper, or join the school late, you will need to enter these manually into **Options** after you have imported everyone else's choices from TOOLS.

Another way you could do it, is that even if a student returns his choices on paper, you could enter them into TOOLS yourself ...so all the choices are held in TOOLS and imported in one go.

You could also then enter the parent's email address (if you knew it) as you entered their choices, and so have a confirmation of their choices emailed to them.



## 5. Can I customize the opening screen for our school?

If you wish, you can change the picture on the opening screen to show your school's logo. But be careful if you make any changes as we cannot be held responsible for the results.

After any change please make sure that you test the system carefully [see page 9].



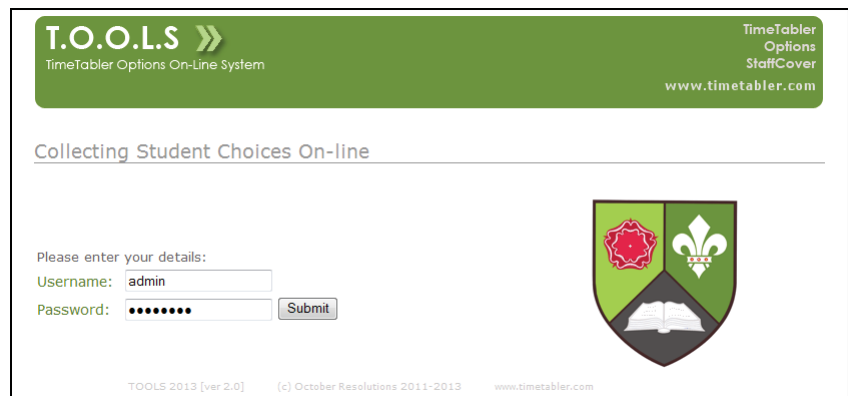
By default the opening screen shows this image:

The file-name of this image is logo.png where logo.png is an image file in the same folder as all the other TOOLS files.

To show your school logo you need to :

- make a png file of your logo (for example in PaintShopPro or Photoshop), (the existing image is 345px x 220px so your image should be a similar size)
- save it as a png file called: logo.png (to make any background colour transparent use alpha channel transparency),
- place this new image in the TOOLS folder to replace the existing logo.png

The opening screen might then look like this:



## 6. My IT Manager doesn't wish to set up TOOLS on the school's server. Is there an alternative?

Yes, the complete TOOLS system can be hosted for you for a nominal fee, see more details at: [http://www.studentoptions.co/student\\_options.html](http://www.studentoptions.co/student_options.html)

This hosting is provided **Free** of charge for the first year when you purchase **Options**.

The hosting saves you the hassle of installing PHP and setting up MySQL databases on your school's server. It also includes full SSL encryption for security.