

# New Features in Options 2015

## Student Inspector Screen

This new screen can be reached via **Review & Counsel** or via **Student Inspector**. It is very useful if, after deciding on the Pattern that you are going to implement, some (few) students don't fit that Pattern, or else they've changed their mind, or perhaps they are new entrants to the school.

With this new screen you can easily discuss the possible solutions and counsel the student.

Then you can apply any changes quickly, by using drag-and-drop.

In this example, Nina Shaw chose French as her 4th Choice, but that doesn't fit the Pattern.

The screenshot shows the 'Student Inspector' interface for Nina Shaw. On the left, a table lists students and their choices across four columns (ch1 to ch4). Nina Shaw's choices are Te, PE, IT, and Fr. On the right, a 'Choices' section shows the same four choices with 'Fr' highlighted in red. Below this is a grid of subject blocks (A, B, C, D) with rows 1-6. Row 5 shows 'Fr' in Block C, which is highlighted in red, indicating a clash.

You can counsel her to :

- Either abandon French and choose a subject from Block A (where the purple header, or the yellow highlighting, shows she does not have a subject at present). You can double-click on any group to show her who else is in each group and where her friends are. If she chooses a new subject you can just drag that new subject to her Choices using your mouse.
- Or she can keep French (the red highlight shows where she can study it) and change one of her other Choices. Again you can just drag the Subject label with your mouse to make the change.

In doing this, the program checks against any Rules that you have specified, and tells you of clashes.

## Subjects and Levels

Scottish schools (especially) often have to specify not just a subject (eg. Physics) but also the Level it is being taught at (eg. National Level 3, 4, 5, 45, H). So if Physics is taught at 5 levels (say) then Physics has to be entered as 5 separate subjects. There is a new feature to help with this.

On the **Subjects Screen**, for each subject, use characters 1-4 of the 'subject abbreviation' to store the subject, and then characters 5 & 6 to store the Level. So in the Physics example above, you might have subject abbreviations like this:

Phys 3	Physics Level 3	10	20	2
Phys 4	Physics Level 4	10	20	2
Phys 5	Physics Level 5	10	20	1
Phys45	Phys Levels 4+5	10	20	1
Phys H	Physics Higher	10	15	1

On the **Student Choices Screen**, because this method requires you to have a lot of subjects (5 for Physics alone in the example above), the screen at Students & Choices now has the option to tick "Compact view". If you do this, then all the Physics subjects above are shown as just one choice, eg. +Phys :

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled 'Choose Subject/Level ...'. It contains a grid of subject abbreviations: Art, CD, De, Dr, Fo, +Phys, Sp, Te. Below the grid is a list of subject abbreviations and their corresponding levels: Phys 3 (Physics Level 3), Phys 4 (Physics Level 4), Phys 5 (Physics Level 5), Phys45 (Phys Levels 4+5), and Phys H (Physics Higher).

If you click on +Phys you are then asked which of the 5 Physics 'Subjects/Levels' you want. This method makes the list of subjects manageable, even if you have a lot of subjects.

You can tick/untick 'Compact view' to switch the feature on/off as you wish.

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## Transferring Students' details to SIMS

If, like SIMS .net, your MIS is capable of exporting and importing Group Membership information via a SYLK file, then you can now send that information directly from **Options** to the MIS.

This populates the option groups, ensures accuracy and will save you a lot of typing time.

The process uses (i) an export from SIMS to **Options**, then (ii) a brief matching process in **Options**, and then (iii) the file is re-imported to SIMS, now with details of which Students are in each Teaching Group in each Block. Before step (i) SIMS needs to have either the curricular structure of the new timetable, or a completely-scheduled new timetable. There are 2 possible scenarios:

Scenario 1 :	Scenario 2 :
<p>1. <i>Perhaps in April-June?</i> When the Curriculum Diagram has been set up in <b>TimeTabler</b> (but not necessarily scheduled), export from <b>TimeTabler</b> to SIMS .net. So there is a timetable structure in SIMS.</p>	<p>1. <i>Perhaps in June-July?</i> When the timetable has been completely scheduled, export from <b>TimeTabler</b> to SIMS .net in the usual way. So there is a timetable structure in SIMS.</p>
<p>2. <i>Perhaps in May-July?</i> Export from SIMS using the 'Export Curriculum Membership Wizard' (which creates a 'SYLK' file). Import that file into <b>Options</b> ... where this new feature allocates the 'T'-Ticks to the correct cells, and exports an updated SYLK file. In SIMS, use the 'Import Curriculum Membership Wizard' to import this SYLK file with all the students' option Choices.</p>	<p>2. <i>Perhaps in June-July?</i> Export from SIMS using the 'Export Curriculum Membership Wizard' (which creates a 'SYLK' file). Import that file into <b>Options</b> ... where this new feature allocates the 'T'-Ticks to the correct cells, and exports an updated SYLK file. In SIMS, use the 'Import Curriculum Membership Wizard' to import this SYLK file with all the students' option Choices.</p>
<p>3. <i>Perhaps in July?</i> Import the completed timetable from <b>TimeTabler</b> when it has been completely scheduled. Provided the Teaching Group Names have not changed in the meantime, the groups will be matched correctly in SIMS.</p>	

For full details of Step 2 click on **Support Centre** and then in the Search Box enter:

SYLK SEARCH

When other MIS (eg. 3Sys, iSAMS, SEEMiS etc) provide a similar procedure we will let you know.

## Other new features in **Options 2015:**

- Students' Choice Listings. You can get a simple list of the students choosing each subject, from either the Students & Choices Screen or the Clash Table. *Scenario* : Useful for sending to the French Dept (for example) for them to check the suitability/ability of students choosing French.
- The Clash table has been improved in several ways. Example 1 : It can now list all the chosen combinations. *Scenario* : Useful as PR for your school, or when counselling disappointed parents: "We have catered for 196 different combinations of subject Choices this year".  
Example 2 : It now lets you specify a 'but did not choose' subject. *Scenario* : you can ask for the students who 'Chose Maths + Physics but did not choose Further-Maths'.
- AutoCreate now gives messages about progress in big schools with long calculations.
- Individual Student Timetables can now be exported as HTML or Excel files for editing or presenting to colleagues.
- An extra printing style has been added to the Group Lists printouts.
- There is a new Rule that can be applied to Students' Choices: "if you choose subject-1 you must also choose subject-2". For example, if you choose 'Double-Maths' then you must also choose 'Maths' (but not vice versa). The 'not vice versa' part makes it different from any existing Rule.
- TOOLS has been updated. You can collect your Choices on-line, directly from students/parents.
- Free (!) Hosting for the TOOLS feature for your school, to make it easier for you.  
For full details visit : <http://studentoptions.co/documentation/TOOLSHostingAgreement2015.pdf>