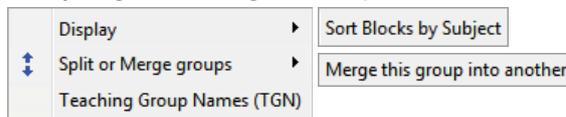
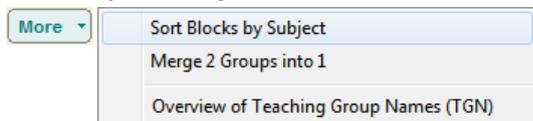


New Features in *Options* 2017

Extra Tools on the Current Pattern Screen

The Current Pattern Screen has 2 further tools to help you manipulate your pattern, which you can access:

- either by clicking on the More button,
- or by Right-clicking on the pattern,



1. Sort Blocks by Subject:
This resorts the groups in each block, into the same order that you chose on the Subjects screen.
2. Merge 2 Groups into 1:
This takes 2 groups (of the same subject in the same block) ... and merges them into 1 group. It's useful if you have ended up with 2 small groups, or have previously 'split' a group and now wish you hadn't. To start: select one of the groups and then choose 'Merge'.

Compare Patterns

You can now compare 2 (similar) patterns to see what the differences are. This can be useful if you have stored or been working on several similar patterns, making tweaks to the pattern, etc.

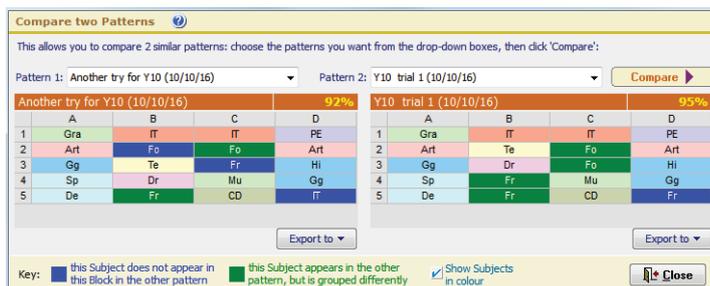
Go to the Design a Pattern Screen (the Pattern Library) **Compare**.

Use the drop-down lists to choose 'Pattern 1' and 'Pattern 2' and then click Compare.

A highlighted group in either pattern means that this group/subject does not appear in this Block in the other pattern.

Notes:

- by default, your last 2 patterns are selected,
- a different order of (the same) subjects within a Block is not counted as a difference,
- swapping 2 entire Blocks (eg. Block-A in pattern-1 is the same as Block-C in pattern-2) is counted as a difference,
- you can export a copy of either pattern (as HTML or Excel), if you wish to send it to a colleague.



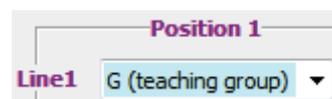
Extending the use of Teaching Group Names (TGNs)

Previously in *Options* you could enter TGNs manually ...for example, if you needed them to export the *Options* data quickly to your MIS (see the articles in the KnowledgeBase in the Support Centre).

In *Options* 2017 you can also generate the TGNs **automatically**. On the Current Pattern Screen, click on **Assign Automatic TGNs**, and then select the format you want, then click Create TGNs.

TGNs can now be displayed, if you wish, on more Printouts for identification purposes, including:

- Group List printouts: – the TGN appears in blue, in the Group title.
- Student timetables: – click on the Advanced button and you can choose "G (Teaching Group)" as one of your fields:



- Pattern Design: – you can choose Show Subject abbrev / full name or TG name.
- Student Choices: – you can choose Show Block-Group-No. or TG name.
- Student Allocations: – you can choose Show Subject abbrev / full name or TG name.

continued...

Validating Group Lists with Heads of Subject

The task of sharing Group Lists with Heads of Department (HoDs), for their information and/or their approval, has been improved in the following ways:

A.

At Print ➡ Group Lists you are now offered a choice of:

For You

For Subject Heads

For You gives you the Group Lists arranged by Block (as before). ie. the Group Lists for each of the groups in Block A, followed by the Groups in Block B, etc.

This is probably the best format for you to use to do any checking, but not the best format for a HoD who may have to check several groups for his/her subject.

For Subject Heads

gives you the Group Lists arranged by Subject. ie. all the groups for the first Subject, then all the groups for the second Subject, etc. See below for how to email these lists to HoDs.

For each of these choices you can use the  button to export individual files, ie. for individual Blocks or for individual Subjects.

The files are Excel files, which can be easily emailed to colleagues (see below). Each file-path includes Labels & the Date, for example C:\OPTwin\Group_Lists\2016\BySubject\Oct19_13.09

B.

You can now (optionally) enter details of your Heads of Department (Heads of Subject) in order to automate the distribution of the Group Lists.

You can access this new screen at any of 4 places:

- Basic Data ➡ Heads of Department
- Subjects ➡ HoDs
- Print ➡ Group Lists ➡ For Subject Heads, then select Email ➡ Setup ➡ HoD email addresses
- Customize Menu ➡ Email ➡ Setup

This screen allows you to enter a formal name, a familiar name and one or more email addresses.

[This data is normally preserved from year to year if you install **Options** in the same folder each year.]

The formal name of the HoD will now appear at the top of the relevant printed Group List.

If the same person covers several subjects, then enter the data once and then click the 'Copy' button and choose another Subject s/he is head of.

On this same screen use Copy any emails to me at: to get a copy yourself, for your records.



C. Emailing Group Lists to HoDs

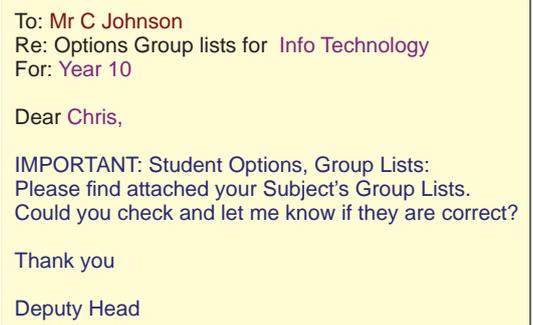
As well as **printing** Group Lists (the students in each group) as in A above, you can now also easily **email** them to the Head of Department for each Subject (for the HoD to check and return).

The email message to HoDs will look like this:

The top 4 items in the email are taken automatically from other parts of **Options** (including part B above).

The default email message (shown here) can be changed at Customize Menu ➡ Email ➡ Setup ➡ Customize email text.

Once the details have been set up (in B above) this should save your admin time.



continued...

Adding a School Logo to your Printouts

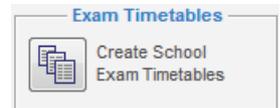
On the Group Lists Screen or the Pattern Design Screen click on  and then follow the instructions to choose a size. Click on Preview to see the Logo in place.

The Logo file must be in JPEG or BMP format.
Setting 'Lines per page' to Auto is usually best.



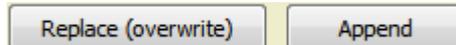
Using Options to create an Exam Timetable

On the Print Screen, click on the button shown here to get a PDF explaining how to do this, or find the article in the KnowledgeBase in the Support Centre.



Other new features in *Options 2017*:

- Importing Students: At Students & Choices Screen  Import Students  Import  Step 4 you are now given 2 choices : **Replace** (as before) or **Append**.



Append checks as you are importing the Students, whether a student of that name already exists – if s/he does, you are asked if you want to omit these 'duplicate' students from the import.

Reason: when (a few) new students join a school, if you re-export a file from your MIS, then this (typically) contains **all** the students, not just the new ones, so using Append avoids getting duplicated students in *Options*.

Features that were added in later Updates to *Options 2016* that you may not be aware of:

- Student Locking: you can now sort, and shift-select students to lock.
- Student omitting: you can now sort, and shift-select students to omit.
- Viewing the Help-movies: a button gives you links to 6 help-movies.
- Importing students from iSAMS & from SEEMiS: both improved in small ways.
- Export to iSAMS: can now optionally include 'core' subjects.
- Importing students: 'Standard format  SIMS.net' added (as well as iSAMS, RM Integris, SEEMiS).
- Better guidance for new users on how to start from scratch.
- The number of blocks in your pattern: you can now choose up to 25 blocks regardless of how many choices your students make ...especially if you are creating an Exam Timetable (see above).
- Max subjects: increased from 200  250.
- Clash table: sort by Popularity: now sorts on 3D figures, if you tick the 3D box.
- Clash Table: 'Report on any Duplicate Choices' button added.
- Clicking 'Assign Students' when you have "Strict" group sizes is now improved so it finds better and more consistent satisfaction percentages (although it may take longer).
- Current Pattern: when you click on the blue [\[?\]](#) of a group to add a TGN manually, you are now told the names of some of the students in the group, to help you recognise it.

TOOLS

- 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/TOOLSHostingAgreement.pdf>