TimeTabler

Timetabling software for Schools

What is the most efficient way to collect your pupils' optional Subject Choices ?

Welcome to *TimeTabler*

Timetabling is probably the most important single event in the school year. It has a powerful effect on the life of a school or college, and as the Timetabler you carry a heavy responsibility.

This Booklet, like the others in the series, is designed to help you with specific aspects of timetabling.

An effective timetable is essential for a good school. A school which does not invest in creating a quality timetable will be forever struggling uphill.
These Booklets give you help on specific topics, so you can achieve the best results using our intuitive and smart software.
You have problems? We have solutions! Based on long timetabling expertise.

We are expert in all aspects of timetabling in schools and colleges, and we have been using our expertise to help and support schools for over 40 years in over 80 countries.

Whether you are new to timetabling, or an experienced timetabler; no matter how complicated your school or how complex your timetabling problems, we have **solutions** for you.

What we offer you:

TimeTabler
Easy-to-use and intuitive smart software, used by schools world-wide to schedule their timetables.
TimeTabler can deal with any curricular structure, of any complexity.
It is supported in 12 ways by a friendly and experienced team ...see the inside back cover for details.
TimeTabler exports your completed timetable to over 40 MIS Admin systems, including SEEMiS.

Options
An easy-to-use program for analysing and organising your students' Subject Choices (Electives).
It is important to get the highest satisfaction rate for the students, to let them study the subject Choices they have chosen. This improves students' motivation, and Exam results, and it improves relations with parents. And it keeps the cost of staffing the curriculum as low as possible.

StaffCover
This well-known program is designed to help you to streamline the daily business of arranging and publishing Cover for absent staff or special events, as quickly and fairly as possible.
StaffCover links directly into *TimeTabler*, so you do not have to type in your timetable again.

The Timetabler's CookBook
This book is the definitive 'bible' on timetabling, for both new and experienced timetablers.

Help & Support
We provide a wide range of **free** Help & Support. See page 6 for more details.

Happy timetabling!

Chris and Keith Johnson
and the rest of the Team

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What is the most efficient way
to collect your pupils' optional Subject Choices?

Whenever pupils are offered a Choice of subjects it can be a big administrative task for the school.
It has implications for Senior Staff and for the Office Staff.
It can occur when, for example:

• pupils in S1 are choosing a Language for S2,
• pupils in S2 are choosing subjects for S3/4, or pupils in S3 or S4 are choosing for S4/5/6, etc.

This paper discusses how to use smart software to:

1. Collect pupils' Choices efficiently, with the minimum of paper & typing,
2. Produce a quality 'pattern' of subjects arranged in Columns (blocks) in such a way as to:
   – show you how big each group will be,
   – allow you to adjust the group sizes,
   – give pupils (or parents) their requested subjects (and Level),
   – in a way which does not require unnecessary (expensive) groups to be staffed,
3. Communicate with parents (and Heads of Subject) in an efficient way, by paper or by email.

In this way the aim is to:

• please pupils and parents, so they get the subjects they want,
• while finding an efficient pattern of subjects that can be staffed within budget.

The *Options* software is discussed on the following pages, with screenshots, and

✔ You can see a short Video outline at: www.timetabler.com/images/Video-OptionsOverview

✔ You can see Comments by Users at: www.timetabler.com/comments-more/#options

✔ You can download a free Tutorial version at: www.timetabler.com/download-opt/
   Using the step-by-step Tutorial Booklet provided, it takes about 1 hour to work through all the steps.

Contents   page

If you want to see details of what Options Structures are used in other schools then please download at:
www.timetabler.com/improvingOptionsStructures.html
The PDF shows you the 3 main styles used in schools, with 7 variations.

A. The *Options* software

Step 1. Enter the pupils' Names

This can be done:

- Manually, see page 18 in the Tutorial Handbook, *or*
- Via a file from **SEEMiS**, see the PDF in the KnowledgeBase in the Support Centre, *or*

 Import Students

- Via a file from WCBS/PASS/3sys, iSAMS and other MIS, contact us for details, ask@timetabler.com
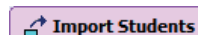
Step 2. For each pupil, enter their subject Choices

This can be done:

- Manually, quickly, by clicking on a Subject Grid : See also page 20 in the Tutorial Handbook.

Or, *more efficiently,*

- Using TOOLS, with the school's Guidance Counsellor. See the next page.

Step 3. Analyse the data, using the Clash Table drawn for you by the Options program.

You can quickly spot:

- unpopular, uneconomic subjects, that may have to be cancelled, or amalgamated into bi- (or even tri-) Level courses,
- over-popular subjects,
- the ideal number of Groups that the school should provide for each Subject.

Step 4. Set up the Columns (blocks), either Manually or using AutoCreate,

Then you can:

- See the number (and names) of Pupils in each group,
- Adjust the size of the groups, by 'shuffling' pupils between groups,
- Email (or print) Group Lists to Heads of Subjects if you want their input at any stage,
- Use the 'Review & Counsel Screen' to discuss Choices with individual pupils (or parents), especially in cases where the Choices need to change,
- Send a MailMerge Letter to Parents, to inform them of the final Choices for their son/daughter
- (optional) Print out Individual Pupil Timetables,
- Print out (or email) final Group Lists for each Teacher, ready for the start of term.

More details of the screens are shown:

- in the Video at : www.timetabler.com/images/Video-OptionsOverview
- In the free Tutorial version at : www.timetabler.com/download-opt/
- in the *Options* Handbook at: www.timetabler.com/Options-Handbook.pdf

B. Using TOOLS to collect your pupils' Choices

You can collect the pupils' Choices for *Options* on **paper** if you wish.
But this involves a lot of paper, a lot of typing by the Office Staff, and a delay as nothing can be analysed or acted upon until the collection is completed.

A better method is to collect the pupils' Choices **on-line**, using the **TOOLS** system.
A common scenario for this is:

– The school's Guidance Counsellor (or the Form Tutor) sits at the computer with the individual pupil, while they discuss the Subject Choices (and Levels).
– Once agreed, the Choices are entered into TOOLS immediately (see the screens below and on the next page).
– An email is sent automatically to the Parent, listing the Subjects (and Level) chosen.
– If the parent requests a review/change then this can be handled in the same way, by cancelling the original Choices and entering the revised Choices.
– If there is more than one Guidance Counsellor, they can work at the same time (because TOOLS is multi-user).

Alternatively, the pupil/parent can be sent a UserName & PIN, so that they can log-on at home, using their smartphone, tablet or computer, and enter their Choices themselves.

Either way, advantages include:

• No further typing is needed, so no Office Staff need be involved,
• The Senior Management Team can see the live data to monitor. They can see early if a subject is very popular or unpopular. They can also see which pupils (eg. school refusers) need to be chased.

After the Choices have been entered the data is exported to *Options*, to be processed as in part A.
The TOOLS system can be hosted on your school server, or see page 5 for free hosting & set-up,

Four examples of the TOOLS screens, both single-choice and multi-choice:

Example 1.   If pupils in S1 are asked to choose a modern foreign Language for S2:

For the blue area you can customize the Header sentence and the Footer sentence to whatever you want.

If a Guidance Counsellor is involved she or he can discuss the best Choice ...and they may have the pupil's exam results or comments from the Head of Subject.

Example 2. If pupils in S3 are asked to choose 8 Subjects (+Level) for S4:

Laura Norder High School   S3

Choices for: Calum Campbell 3M

Extra information: Click here for an example.   Click here for course information.

Please enter your 8 choices by entering 1, 2, 3, etc. in the box by your chosen subjects.

Subject	Choice
Art N3 (Art 3)	
Art N45 (Art 45)	
German (De)	
Drama (Dr)	1
French (Fr)	
Geography (Gg)	2
History (Hi)	
Info Technology (IT)	
Music (Mu)	
P.E. (PE)	
Spanish (Sp)	
Technology (Te)	

Submit   Reset this form

In this example, it shows the open **'Free Choice'** screen (though you may also specify some Rules, *for example,* "You must choose a Language").

Levels can be included, as shown here for Art.

This example refers to 8 Choices, but you can choose whatever number you want for your school.

The **Options** program can then use **AutoCreate** to find the best arrangement of these subjects in Columns to suit these pupils.

Example 3. If S3 pupils are to choose 8 Subjects (+Level) for S4 but you want to apply some specific Rules to limit the Choices:

For example, "You must choose a Humanities subject."

You can have one, *or more,* "Choose ONE" screens like Example 1 shown first,
followed by a "Free Choice" Screen like Example 2 for the remaining subjects, as shown here:

Choose ONE of the following Humanities subjects:

○ Geography (Gg)   ● History (Hi)

If you don't choose History here you can choose it later.   Next

Please enter your 7 choices by entering 2, 3, 4, etc. by your subjects.

Subject	Choice
Art N3 (Art 3)	
Art N45 (Art 45)	
German (De)	3
Drama (Dr)	2
French (Fr)	
History (Hi)	Already selected
Info Technology (IT)	

Example 4. If you have Fixed (unchanging) Columns in S456 and you want to find out the sizes of the Groups, in order to adjust them:

In this case you have 8 screens *(or whatever number of columns you have)* like Example 1, one screen for each of your Fixed Columns/Blocks, like these:

When the data is imported into **Options** you can use the Shuffle Screen to look for adjustments to balance the size of the groups.
And you can use the Review & Counsel Screen as necessary to counsel individuals to change subjects.

See also Steps 3 & 4 of Part A.

Choose ONE of the following Subjects:

○ Art (Ar)   ○ Economics (Econ)   ○ Geography (Gg)
○ Chemistry (Ch)   ● French (Fr)   ○ Music (Mu)

Column 1.   Next

Choose ONE of the following Subjects:

○ Biology (Bi)   ○ Graphics (Gra)   ● Physics (Ph)
○ German (De)   ○ History (Hi)   ○ Spanish (Sp)

Column 2.   Next

Choose ONE of the following Subjects:

○ Business (Bus)   ○ Graphics (Gra)   ○ Science (Sc)
○ Chemistry (Ch)   ○ Info Tech (IT)   ● Technology (Te)

Column 3.   Next

C.   Help and Support

Included with the software, we provide a huge range of **free Help & Support**.
This includes HelpScreens, HelpMovies, a KnowledgeBase and a Support Centre staffed by experienced timetablers. For more details see the next page.

Further Information

For more information about using *Options* in other ways, and about Timetabling in Scotland,
see: www.timetabler.com/scotland

To see Comments by Users of *Options* & **TOOLS**, see: www.timetabler.com/comments-more/#options

For more information and screenshots,   see: www.timetabler.com/options1
and: www.timetabler.com/improvingOptionsStructures.html

For New Users we provide **free** extra **Gold-Start Support**.
For details of Gold-Start see: www.timetabler.com/gold-start

For more about TOOLS, see: www.timetabler.com/TOOLS
For **free hosting of TOOLS**, provided by MIST Services Ltd, see: www.studentoptions.co
and www.studentoptions.co/documentation/TOOLSHostingAgreement.pdf

To know more about: • timetabling your S4 / 5 / 6, and S3,

• timetabling your S1 / S2 quickly (in perhaps just 20 minutes!),

• exporting the completed timetable into **SEEMiS**,

see our KnowledgeBase or send your questions to: ask@timetabler.com

If you have already purchased *Options* and want Help please use the Support Centre:
See HelpMovie 4 if you are not sure how to do this.

To receive a copy of the free **monthly eNewsLetter** on all aspects of timetabling, give your details on our web-site, www.timetabler.com, at the bottom of the screen:

(Use your Home email address if you suspect your school system may block the NewsLetter.)

Help & Support for your timetabling

With *TimeTabler* we provide the most comprehensive and expert timetabling support in the world.

We support you in **12** ways:

1 There is a free **Tutorial**, with a step-by-step Tutorial Booklet, to give you a quick introduction to the general style of the program.
Visit **www.timetabler.com** and use the Menu shown to get your free copy:

2 In *TimeTabler* every screen has its own interactive **HelpScreen** (as you can see in the free Tutorial versions).
Just click on the part of the screen you want Help on.

3 We provide a range of animated **HelpMovies** (video tutorials), to explain each main screen with a guided tour.
This is good at the start, to learn it quickly, and also at the start of each new timetabling season for quick revision.

4 *TimeTabler* comes with a fully-illustrated 250-page **printed Manual**. This contains a large number of **Worked Examples**, from simple 'setting' to the most complicated 'Sixth Form'.
It includes lots of timetabling Tactics, Tricks and Tips, spelt out step by step.

5 We provide a **QuickStart Guide**, with a checklist of steps that you need to take.

6 The book by Keith Johnson, Mervyn Wakefield and Chris Johnson on *"Timetabling – A Timetabler's CookBook"* is the standard 'bible' on timetabling **principles**. It covers every aspect from A to Z.
The web-site also has some free **INSET/CPD materials** on timetabling principles.
And if you are **new** to timetabling, there is more information for you.

7 We send you a **monthly NewsLetter** to remind you of the essential tasks at each stage of the timetabling year. To receive your free copy, go to:
www.timetabler.com/signupfornewsletter/

8 You will have free access to our 24/7 **SupportCentre**. This includes a large fully-searchable '**Knowledge Base**', where you can find answers to common timetabling problems, and you can download over 300 articles on timetabling.
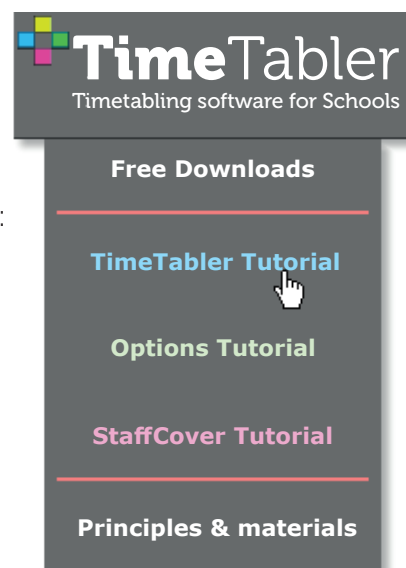
9 We provide detailed documentation on how to **Export** your completed timetable to SEEMiS and the other Admin Systems.

10 Before you start timetabling, our *Options* software helps you to find the most efficient arrangement of 'elective' choice subjects. Simply and quickly.

11 Above all there is the free expert **HelpLine Support**, from our team of experienced timetablers. For New Users we provide free **Gold-Start** Enhanced Support & Guidance.
More details at: www.timetabler.com/gold-start

12 And if you need a training course, or if you want some on-site in-school Help, then our *TimeTabler* **Associates** can provide it.

So we provide a complete service for Timetablers. For you.

www.timetabler.com

TimeTabler
Timetabling software for Schools

Free Downloads

TimeTabler Tutorial

Options Tutorial

StaffCover Tutorial

Principles & materials

www.timetabler.com

A Timetabler's CookBook

Keith Johnson

Scan me:
QR code for your
tablet or phone

For more information and free downloads, visit   www.timetabler.com

Other titles in this series:

- *Options* Tutorial

- Employing and timetabling Part-time teachers

- Scheduling a Special School, or a PRU, or a small school, or a small Sixth Form

- White Paper on Improving your school's Timetable

- Scheduling timetables for Senior/Junior schools with different period-times

- Will your next timetable be more difficult?

- Timetabling for Social Distancing in schools

- Saving Money via the timetable

- Options Choices : 3 models and 7 variations on them

- Improving your school's Options

Download these Booklets and others, free of charge,
from : https://www.timetabler.com/timetabling-ebooks/

My four choices are Maths, and
I don't mind about the other two

Other booklets in the series include :

- Help & Support we provide for you

- Timetabling Primary and Prep schools

- Timetabling a Special School or PRU

- Options structures : 3 models & 7 variations

- Improving your school's Option Choices

- Doing 'What if...?' investigations

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from : https://www.timetabler.com/timetabling-ebooks/

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler"

– Albert Einstein

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TimeTabler
Providing timetabling solutions for 40 years