

‘OOB’ or Out of Block Lessons in the Sixth Form

In the final stages of scheduling a Sixth Form (Years/Grades 12/13), while using Container Blocks in **TimeTabler**, it is sometimes necessary to move individual lessons ‘out of block’ or OOB. This can be a big help in solving problems in the Sixth Form.

For example, Music may be in Block D on your 6th Form Curriculum Diagram ...but you find that you can’t fit all the lessons within the time-slots used by the rest of the Block D subjects. Suppose, by inspection, you find that because only a few students are studying Music, none of them is taking any of the subjects that are in Block A. So one or more Music lessons could occur at the times when Block A is scheduled. Or the Music can be placed in ‘minority time’. Either way, they will be ‘out of block’ or ‘OOB’.

Moving lessons ‘out of block’

There are 2 main ways to do this, see the examples on the next pages. It needs some explanation first. The key points here are that:

- (i) Lessons (activities) labelled with a Container ID of ‘A’ can only go in Container Block A. They cannot go into any other Container Block.
- (ii) For a lesson to be placed in Container Block C it must have a Container ID of ‘C’. If it has a Container ID of ‘A’ it cannot go in Block C.
- (iii) So, to place a lesson ‘out of block’ you will have to change its Container ID to the appropriate letter (or, more dangerously, switch off containers, see example 4).

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Example 1:

Supposing you have a Physics activity in one of your batches like this:

12B SSSSS KJo 'A'

ie. on the 2nd (B) row of Container Block 'A', 5 Singles with teacher KJo.

On the Curriculum Diagram it looks like this:

	Cont A [5]	Cont B [5]	Cont C [5]	Cont D [5]	Cont E [3]
12A	1 His RR 3 SSS	1 Mat JHa 5 DSSS	1 Bio GWa 3 DS	A Che RC 2 D	A Mat FH 2 SS
12B	2 Phy KJo 5 SSSSS	2 Lit JR 5 DSSS	2 Tec AK 5 DSSS	B Eco JV 5 DSSS	B Eng DA 2 SS
12C	3 Geo DK 4 SSSS	3 Soc VP 3 DS	3 Geo DK 3 DS	C Spa EB 4 DSS	C Eng DS 1 S
12D	4 Eng AJ 4 SSSS	4 Fre LM 3 SSS	4 Art HL 4 DSS	D Mat JWi 5 DSSS	D Phy KJo 3 SSS
12E		5 Bio GWa 5 DSSS	5 Lit JR 5 DSSS	E Dra AJ 5 DSSS	E Mat JWi 3 SSS
12F		e Law AF 4 DSS			F Mus DW 3 SSS

Suppose you have successfully placed the first 4 Singles of this Physics activity on the schedule. If so they will be greyed-out if you view the activity in the Batch, using the List-View Screen:

Year 12 Blocks						Help-Movies
No.	Class	Lessons	Teacher Team	DayB	Label	ContID
1	12B	SSSSS	KJo		A	A

But suppose now you cannot find a time-slot in any of Block A's times to place the 5th Single. This is the problem. How can we solve it?

Suppose, by inspection you find a suitable time-slot in the ones that are R-Reserved for Block C. You might find this by :

- clicking on the 'dots' on the time-line of the Visual Builder Screen, to see the Report, as explained in Sections E12-E13 of the Manual, to see if the teacher is free, and
- Checking the Students' list of Subject Choices, to check if any of the students taking this subject (Physics) are also taking any of the Subjects in Block C (in this example).

In this example let's suppose that in this particular population none of the Physics students is taking Art or Technology, and that if they are studying Biol, Geog or Lit then they are doing so in one of the other groups, not any of the groups in Block C.

Assuming that all is well, and so the 'out of block' move is possible, you need to change the Container ID for the 5th Physics Single (only) from 'A' to 'C', so it is allowed into the C time-slots. To do this you need to go back to the Batch, and find the original activity, which was:

12B SSSSS KJo 'A'

and change it so that it now shows **as 2 activities**, with 4 Singles in 'A' and 1 Single in 'C'.

However there is a complication, shown in this example:

Container 'C' already has 5 periods on row B (the Technology, 12B), and we want to keep that Container to be only 5 periods wide or it will not fit into the week.

So we need to change the 5th Single of Physics to be in block 'C' **and on a spare row** (the 12F row in this example).

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So, in summary, we need to change the Physics from:

12B SSSS KJo 'A'

to be:

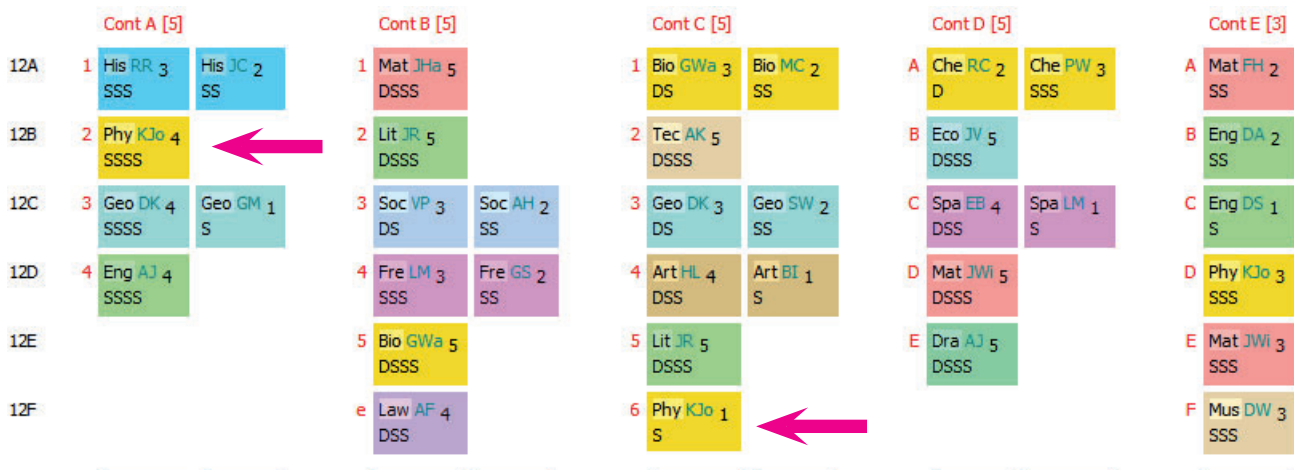
12B SSSS KJo 'A'
12F S KJo 'C'

On the List-View Screen it would look like this:

Year 12 Blocks							Help-Movies
No.	Class	Lessons	Teacher Team	DayB	Label	ContID	
1	12B	SSSS	KJo		A	A	
2	12F	S	KJo		A	C	

Note 1 : Even though you are changing the Container ID from 'A' to 'C' (in this example), you can leave the Block Label as 'A' if you wish the Physics group to be labelled with an 'A' on the Printouts (as shown by the blue arrow above). This is likely to be your preferred choice. See also the section on page 5 about exporting.

The Curriculum Diagram (the Batch) now looks like this:



Now, when you go to the Visual Builder Screen, the 5th Single **can** be placed in one of the time-slots that was R-Reserved for Container Block C. Problem solved.

Note 2 : If there wasn't a spare row (eg. if you wanted the Physics to go into Block B in this example) then you would need to add an extra Class/row (eg. 12G) on the Classes Screen.

Note 3 : If you intending to export (to an MIS) a schedule that includes OOB lessons, see page 5.

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Example 2:

If instead you were wanting the 5th Single to be placed in a time-slot that isn't part of a Container Block (eg. in a completely spare period during the week), then the 2 rows should look like this:

12B SSSS KJo 'A'
12B S KJo

ie. the 5th Single does not have a Container ID, so now it can be placed anywhere outside a Container Block, at any time when 12B (and KJo) is not busy.

Example 3:

If instead you were wanting the 5th Single of Physics to be placed in a time-slot where other students are doing Games (or perhaps General Studies), then the 2 rows would look like:

12B SSSS KJo 'A'
12ABCDEF S Ga1 Ga2 Ga3 Ga4 KJo

where 12ABCDEF is a simple block across the whole Year and Ga1, Ga2, Ga3, Ga4 are to be replaced by the initials of the Games staff.

ie. the 5th Single of Physics does not have a Container ID, and it is now part of a team of staff across the whole year.

Example 4:

Alternatively, there is an easy (and sweeping) way to simply allow yourself to place these lessons anywhere! You can simply switch-off Container Blocks temporarily



at: Customize Menu ► Use Container Blocks

just while you make these manual changes – and then switch them back on again.

Switching-off Container Blocks is an easy way out, if you just want to put a group that should be in Container Block 'A' into another Container Block (or no Container Block) ... but we suggest you use it only at the **end** of scheduling. It can be dangerous!

This is because if you carry on scheduling after that, you will get lots of "." (lesson can't go here) on the Visual Builder screen, even though you seem to be adhering to the Container Block rules! If you look at the reason, it will say that the spread of a Container Block has been exceeded (not because of your proposed move now, but because of the 'illegal' changes you made when Container Blocks were off). So it can make it very hard to schedule Container Blocks thereafter!

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Exporting to an MIS

For some MIS the export file that transfers the information from **TimeTabler** to the MIS includes information about the Container ID. For these MIS the out-of-block lessons will have the 'wrong' Container ID.

One of the rules of Teaching Group Names (TGNs) is that two groups *cannot* have the same name if they are (according to the curriculum diagram) for different classes/students ...which is the (apparent) situation with out-of-block lessons.

The solution is to put these out-of-block activities back in the Container Block (at least while you export).

Although this sounds odd, you can (provided you have now finished scheduling) now put the out-of-block lessons back into the Container Blocks that they want to go with.

ie. for the situation in Example 1 on pages 2–3 you temporarily say that the 5th Physics lesson is back in Container 'A' while you export.

To do this we suggest the following steps:

1. Make a Backup (see HelpMovie 10) to save your current data, so that you can easily return to this version with the 'wrong' Container IDs as changed in Example 1-3.
You'll need to do this if you find that you have to return to scheduling because of some later adjustment needed to the timetable. ie. if you continue scheduling, make sure that you use only the version with the adjusted Container IDs as in Example 1–3 above.
2. Change the Container ID of each out-of-block lesson to be what you originally intended it to be. For example, in Example 1 on pages 2–3 you temporarily say that the 5th Physics lesson is back in Container 'A' while you export.

To do this: go to the Curriculum Diagram for the relevant Batch, highlight the activity, then click 'Open List-View' to see all the activities listed one-by-one.

[Open List-View](#)

Here you can change an activity's Container ID to make sure that like groups are in the same Container. Eg. to put an activity into Container Block 'A', just enter 'A' in the Container ID box, and then click Apply.

Example 1 will then look like this:

Year 12 Blocks							Help-Movies
No.	Class	Lessons	Teacher Team	DayB	Label	ContID	
1	12B	SSSS	KJo		A	A	
2	12F	S	KJo		A	A	

Note : You have to use the 'List-View' method for this, as the 'wizard' method of editing activities won't allow you to just put an already-scheduled lesson into a Container Block like this.

Some MIS do not use the Container ID at all, they just the Block Label, so for these MIS you do not need to do any of the work on this page.

For MIS which import the Curriculum Structure (eg. SIMS) you may need to give your OOB lessons manual TGNs, and you may also need to relax the 'Rules for combining groups'. If in any doubt, please contact the **TimeTabler** Support Centre, as in HelpMovie 4.