advanced

Software Powered Possibility

Learner Options

Cloud School

Author: Fiona Thompson

Last Updated: 22/12/2021

Legal Notice

© 2021, Advanced Computer Software Group Limited.

This document contains confidential and / or proprietary information. The content must not be disclosed to third parties without the prior written approval of Advanced Computer Software Group Limited or one of its subsidiaries as appropriate (each referred to as “Advanced”). External recipients may only use the information contained in this document for the purposes of evaluation of the information and entering into discussions with Advanced and for no other purpose.

Whilst Advanced endeavours to ensure that the information in this document is correct and has been prepared in good faith, the information is subject to change and no representation or warranty is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information. Advanced does not accept any responsibility or liability for errors or omissions or any liability arising out of its use by external recipients or other third parties.

No information set out or referred to in this document shall form the basis of any contract with an external recipient. Any external recipient requiring the provision of software and/or services shall be required to enter into an agreement with Advanced detailing the terms applicable to the supply of such software and/or services and acknowledging that it has not relied on or been induced to enter into such an agreement by any representation or warranty, save as expressly set out in such agreement.

The software (if any) described in this document is supplied under licence and may be used or copied only in accordance with the terms of such a licence. Issue of this document does not entitle an external recipient to access or use the software described or to be granted such a licence.

The development of Advanced software is continuous, and the published information may not reflect the current status. Any particular release of the software may not contain all of the facilities described in this document and / or may contain facilities not described in this document.

Advanced Computer Software Group Limited is a company registered in England and Wales with registration number 05965280 whose registered office is at Ditton Park, Riding Court Road, Datchet, Berkshire, SL3 9LL.

A full list of its trading subsidiaries is available at www.oneadvanced.com/legal-privacy

Contents

1 Introduction 1
2 System Settings 2
2.1 Configure Options 2
3 Data Pre-requisites 4
4 Learner Options Wizard 5
4.1 Step 1 – Option Set Parameters 5
4.1.1 Free list 6
4.1.2 Set Blocks 6
4.2 Step 2 – Learner Scope 6
4.3 Step 3 – Learner Option Settings 7
4.3.1 Change the Number of Options Learners Take 8
4.3.2 Allow Reserve 9
4.4 Step 4 – Subject Scope 9
4.4.1 Define Subjects Requiring More Than One Block 10
4.5 Step 5 – Block Structure 11
4.5.1 Free List 12
4.5.2 Fixed Blocks 13
4.6 Step 6 – Subject Descriptions 14
4.7 Step 7 – Options Calendar 15
4.7.1 Self Service Dates 15
5 Publishing Option Sets 17
5.1 Adding Further Option Sets 17
5.2 Editing Existing Option Sets 17
6 Learner Option Selections 18
6.1 Learner Permissions 18
6.2 Options Entry 18
6.3 Free List Entry 19
6.3.1 Step 1 – Guidance for Making Selections 19
6.3.2 Step 2 – Learner Options Selection 19
6.3.3 Step 3 - Summary of Selections 20
6.4 Fixed Block Entry 21
6.4.1 Step 1 – Guidance for Making Selections 21
6.4.2 Step 2 – Learner Options Selection 21
6.4.3 Step 3 Summary of Selections 23
7 Manually Entering/Amending Learner Choices 25

8 Clearing Learner Choices 26
9 Exporting for TimeTabler Options 27
10 Importing 29
10.1 Step 1: Import Details 29
10.2 Step 2: Block Details 29
10.2.1 Fixed Block 29
10.2.2 Free List 30
10.3 Step 3: Map Imported Subjects 30
10.4 Step 4: Map Imported Learners 31
10.5 Step 5: Generate Teaching Groups 31
10.5.1 Teaching Group Defaults 31
10.5.2 Teaching Group Details 32
11 Appendix 1 34
11.1 Data Preparation 34
11.2 Setting Up Subjects 34
11.3 Fixed Blocks – An Explanation 34
11.4 Free List – An Explanation 35

1 Introduction

In most UK and Irish educational establishments, students will be offered some element of choice around which subjects they wish to study as examination subjects during the last few years of their compulsory education.

This is achieved by many establishments including option blocks in the curriculum. In some establishments, these options blocks may take up a substantial amount of the timetable cycle, in other establishments, the time allowed for option blocks may have been minimised to allow for more core subject time.

Option blocks are a set of teaching groups which are timetabled to occur simultaneously a specified number of times during each timetable cycle. On your timetable, it will be scheduled as a block which is comprised of a set team of teachers who must all be available to teach simultaneously.

Some schools offer options in years 9 and 10 then again in year 12 if they have a sixth form. Learners typically must choose one subject from each of these blocks, although there are sometimes exceptions. You may also know an option block by the term column, pool or elective.

The way options are run and blocks determined can vary slightly from establishment to establishment, depending on the ethos of the school and also the resource available to them.

The Learner Options module in Cloud School, along with the TimeTabler Options package, allows you to manage your schools options process from within your MIS.

This manual will guide you through the Cloud School side of Learner Options, explain the setup choices and also cover the export and import routines.

You will have been provided with a separate manual covering how to use the TimeTabler Options package to generate and/or fit your blocks.

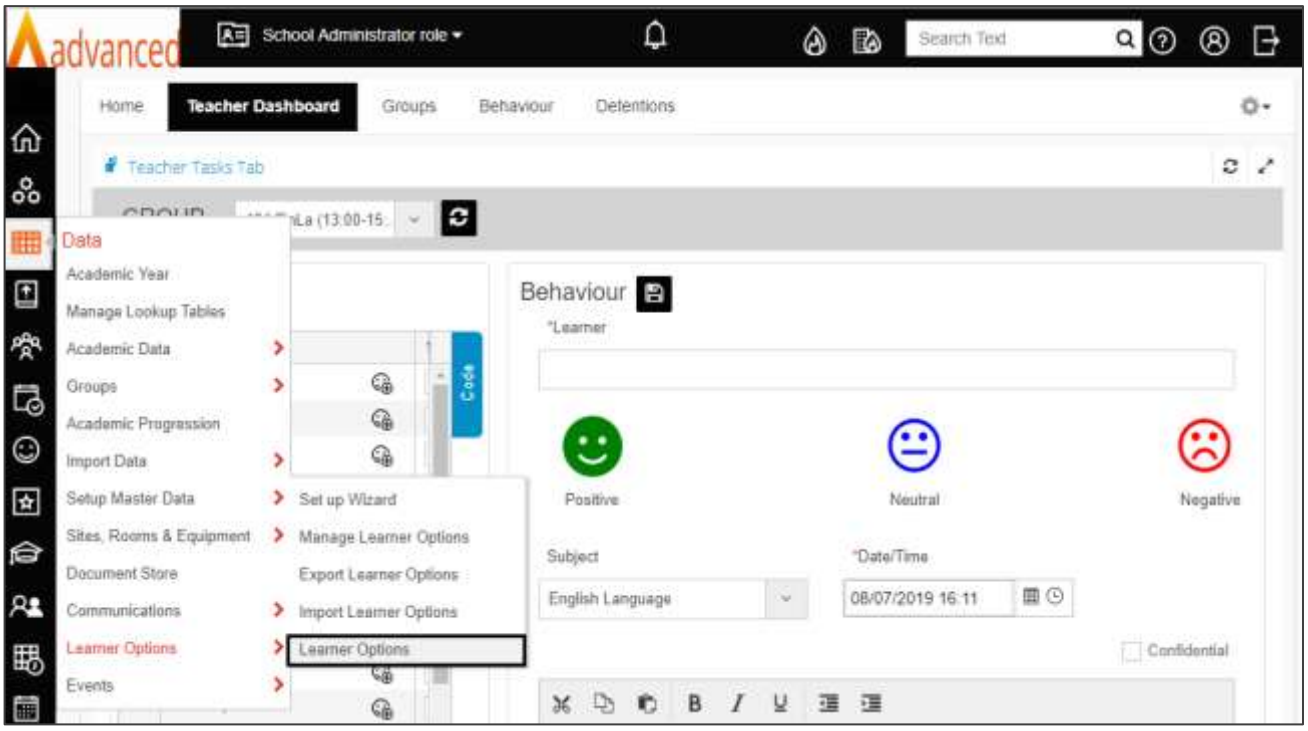
2 System Settings

Before you begin to setup and use Learner Options, there are some system settings which must be configured correctly according to use. This section documents how to configure the settings correctly.

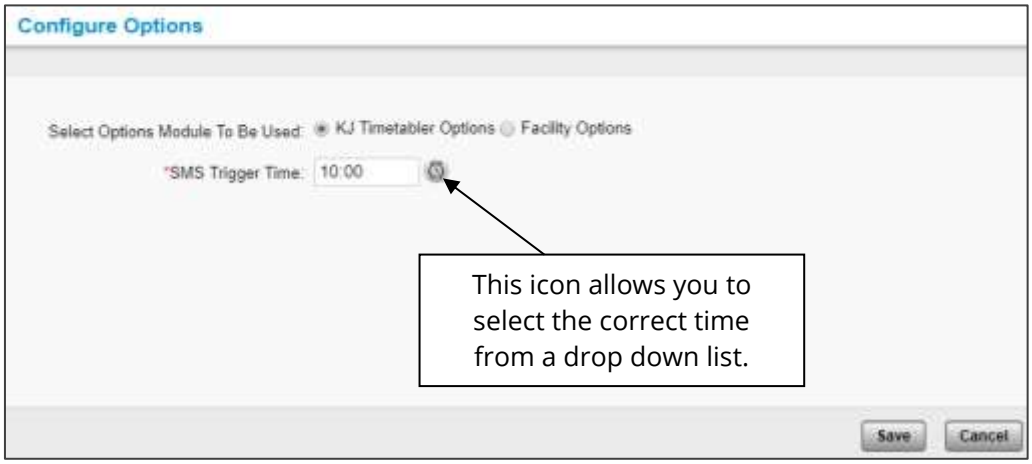
2.1 Configure Options

There are two import options to choose from – KJ Timetabler Options and Facility Options. It is also possible to set a trigger time at which SMS messages are sent out to learners, should you wish to send SMS messages to learners.

> Select **Data | Learner Options | Learner Options**

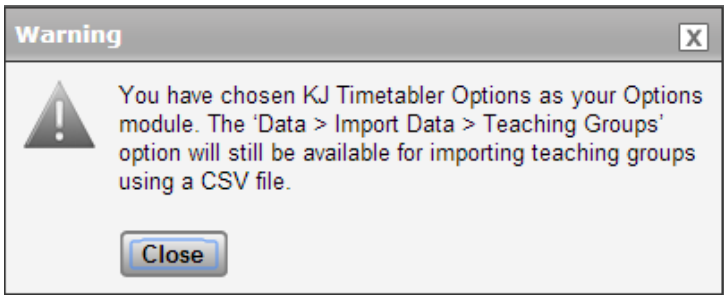


> Select **KJ Timetabler Options**
> If you wish to send SMS reminders to learners, select the trigger time here too



> Click **Save**

The following message will appear:



This message advises you that you are still able to import teaching groups via CSV should you wish to do so.

> Click **Close** then **OK**

3 Data Pre-requisites

Before you begin the options setup, the following must have happened in Cloud School as preparation:

- the new **Academic Year** must have been created
- the **Course Year Mapping** and **Course Year Promotion** steps (1 & 2) of the Academic Progression must have been completed
- **Subjects** must have been set up accordingly, including those where a double or single option is available to learners
- **Course Subject Mapping** needs to have been completed for all subjects being used

See **Appendix 1** of this manual for further information on where to find guidance covering this setup and how to setup a single or double option choice.

4 Learner Options Wizard

This section allows you to setup the specifications which will determine how the data must be entered and managed for the option choices selections. For example, this is where you would specify how many option blocks you will have running in year 10 and which subjects are available to learners as choices.

In this section you will create Option Sets which will detail how many blocks are to be in each option set, which students need to be choosing from those option sets, the time frame during which these learners can make their selections and so on.

Once option sets have been created, this screen will also be used to manage the data for each option set.

> Select **Data | Learner Options | Wizard**

A step by step process to work through the setup of the options will open.

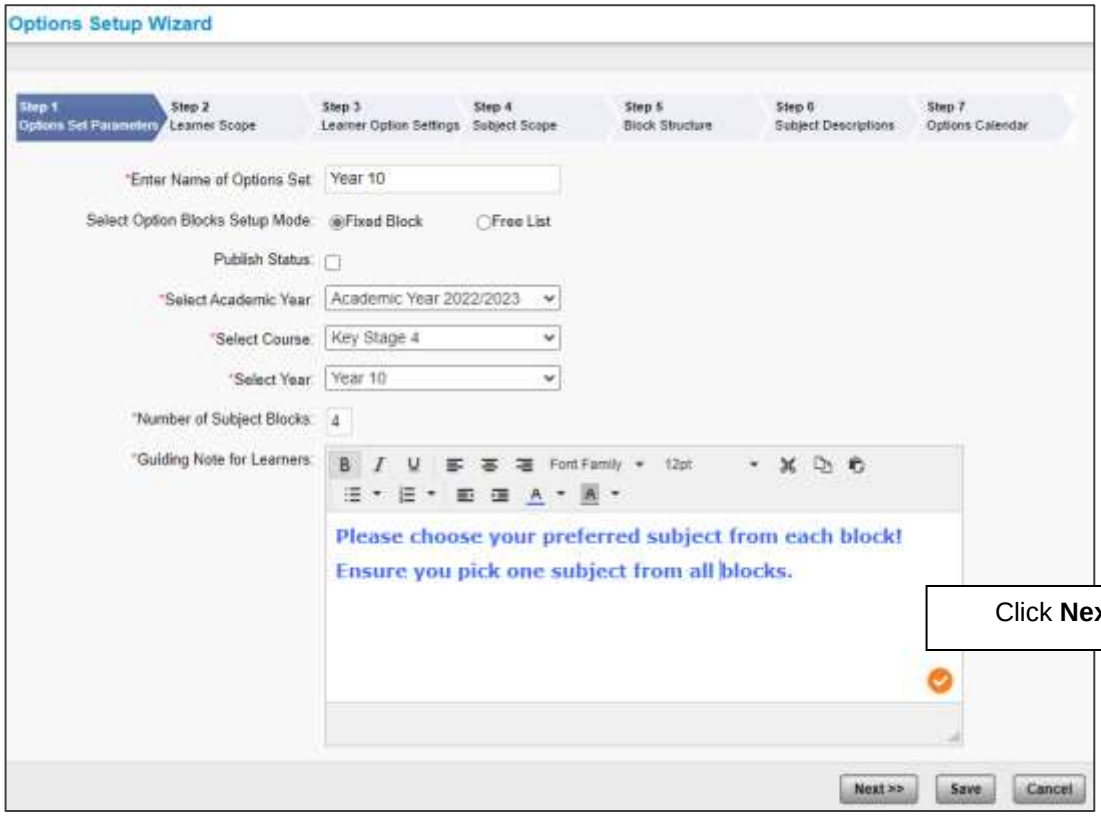
(When creating Option Sets for the first time, use the Wizard; when subsequently editing the data or the setup, use the Manage Learner Options section

4.1 Step 1 – Option Set Parameters

An option set will determine which cohort of learners the option set is being created for, how the parameters must be defined, the scope of learners and subjects and which academic year the option set is being created for.

> Enter the name of the first Options Set you wish to create – e.g. **KS4**
> Select whether the option choices will be formed from a **free list*** or from **set blocks***
> Select the Academic Year the option set is for – e.g. **2022/2023**
> Select the Course the options will be going into – e.g. **KS4**
> Select the Year the options will be going into – e.g. **Year 10**
> Fill in the Number of Subject Blocks – e.g. the number of option blocks learners have to choose from
> Add a **Guiding Note** for Learners – e.g. instruction for completion (this will appear when learners log in to make their choices)

Note: Publish Status determines when the Option Set will be 'published' to learners – i.e. made available for data entry - and will work in conjunction with the Options Calendar dates set on Step 7. It is recommended you work through the wizard steps then return to publish later.



Click **Next >>**

Note: Each step will be automatically saved when you click **Next**, however, should you wish to save and exit mid-setup, you can use the **Save** button and then return to complete the steps later.

4.1.1 Free list

This would allow learners a free choice of any combination of subjects you are able to offer as a school and you attempt to set blocks up which satisfy learner choices to a high percentage. See full description for free choice option blocks in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Set Blocks

This would allow you to pre-populate blocks with subjects which learners then have to choose from. This allows you to force learners to pick a balanced curriculum and retain some control over the resourcing you need to schedule but offers learners less choice. See full description for fixed option blocks in Appendix 1.

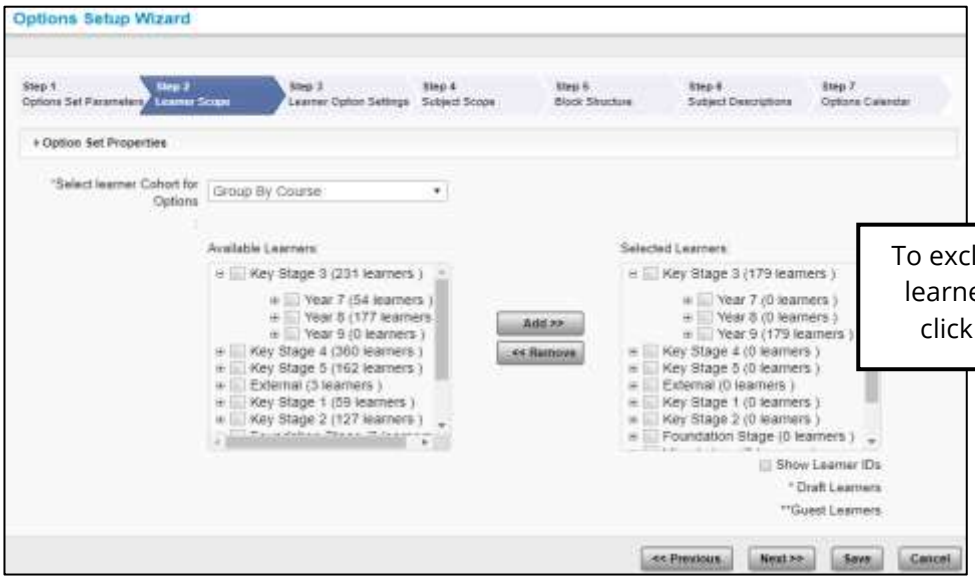
4.2 Step 2 – Learner Scope

This step in the wizard allows you to choose the learners who will be selecting options in this particular set. For example, if your option set is for the new Year 10, then you would select all learners in year 9 who are required to choose options from this set.

By default, no learners are selected. Learners are grouped by and can be added by Course, Year, Registration or House – each of these groupings can be expanded, enabling you to drill down and select/de-select individual learners should you require.

- Make your choice of learner groupings in 'Select learner Cohort for Options' – e.g. **Group By Year**
- Tick the appropriate cohort for their current year – e.g. **Year 9**

- Select the + icon should you wish to show all learners in Year 9 and drill down for individual inclusion/exclusion
- Click **Add >>** when you are happy with your selection
- You will see that the learners now appear in the list on the right
- Again you can select the + icon to add or remove learners individually
- Tick Show Learner Ids if you need to distinguish between learners with the same names
- Notice that an * will appear next to any learners who are 'Draft' status



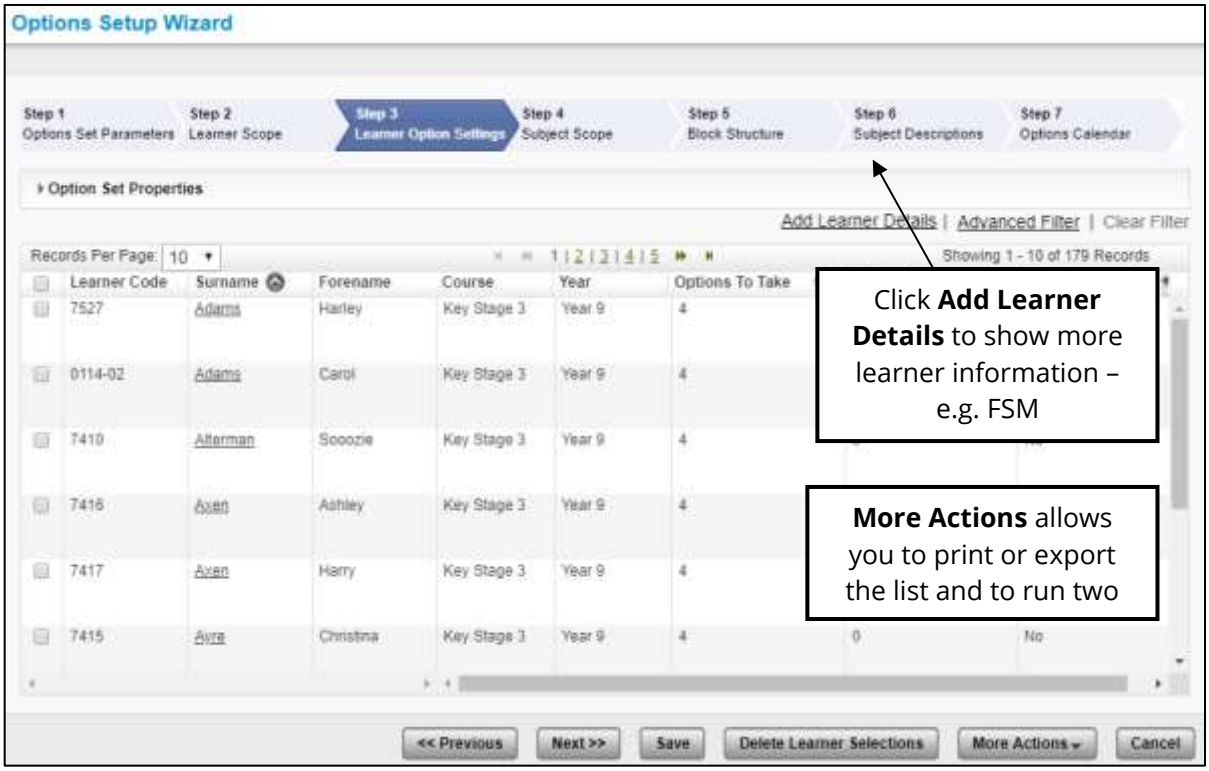
To exclude individual learners select and click **<< Remove**

- Click **Next >>**

4.3 Step 3 – Learner Option Settings

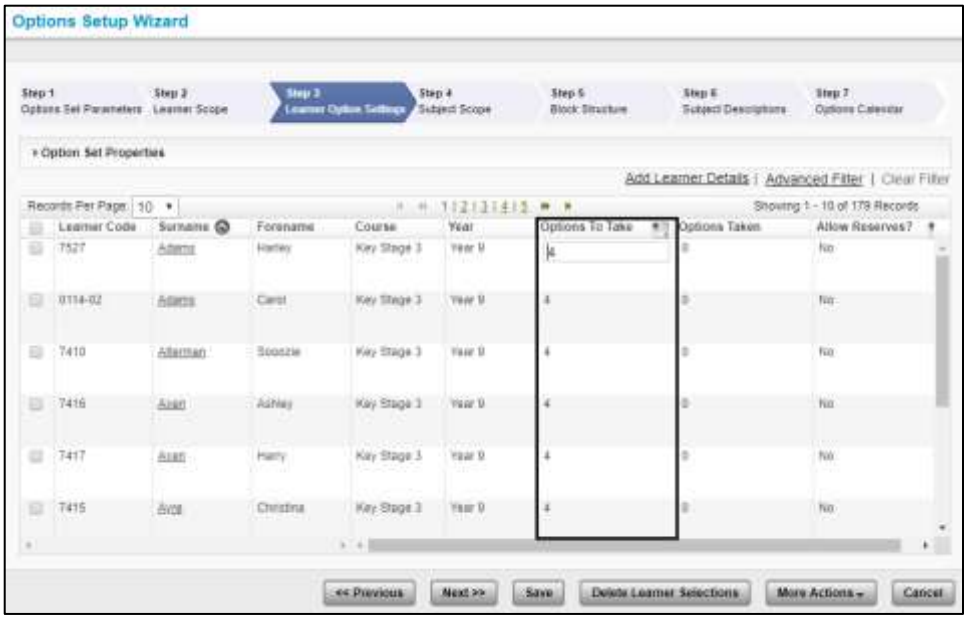
This step allows you to modify requirements for individual learners. The number of options each learner should choose is taken from the initial setup specifying the number of bands. However, you may have learners who only choose two of the options rather than all four.

.



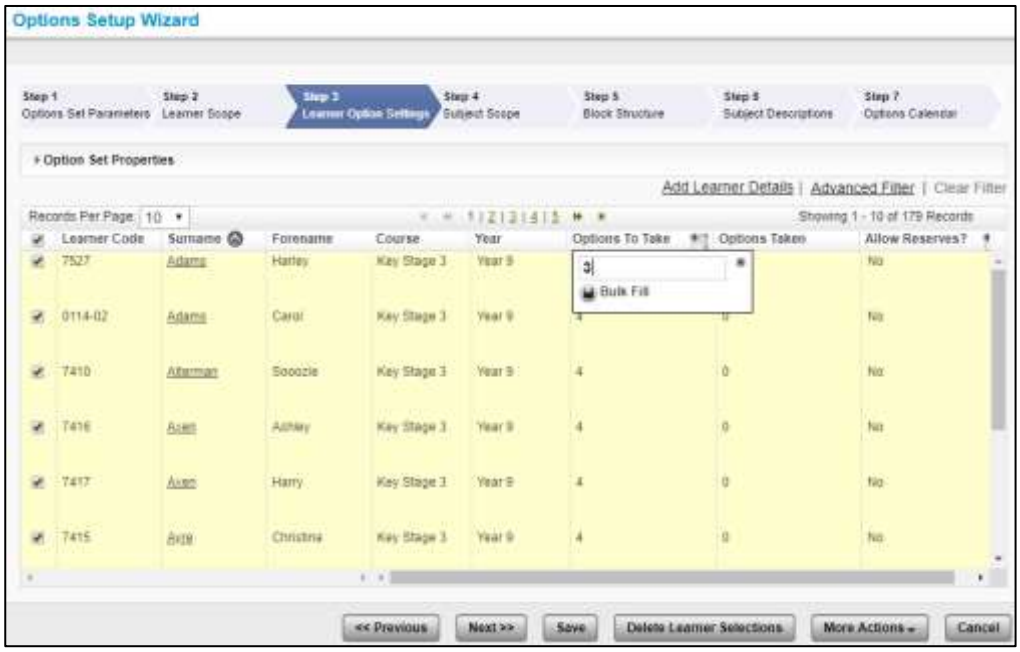
4.3.1 Change the Number of Options Learners Take

> If you wish to reduce the number of options an individual learner can take, **double click in the Options to Take column** for their row and the field will be editable
> Change the value and click away from the box



> If you wish to reduce the number of options a selection of learners must take, consider using the **Advanced Filter** to select their record(s) if it will narrow the list down usefully

- Multi-select the records of the learners you are changing to the same value
- Click the **Bulk Fill** icon on the column header
- Fill in the appropriate value – e.g. 3
- Click **Bulk Fill**
- Click **Save** then **OK**



The 'Options To Take' column will be updated for the learners you selected.

4.3.2 Allow Reserve

Should you wish to allow learners to select a reserve choice when choosing their options, then you can set the Allow Reserve value to Yes using Bulk Fill.

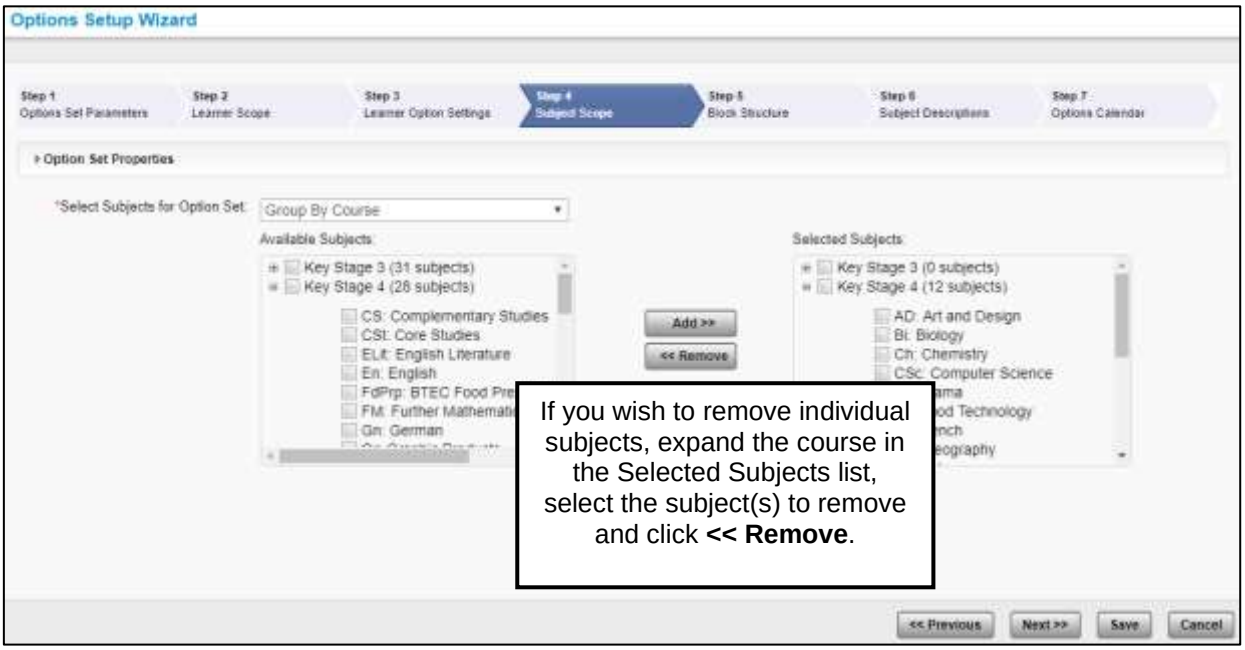
- If only certain learners are allowed to choose a reserve, use the **Advanced Filter** and/or select particular record(s)
- If all learners are allowed to choose a reserve, leave them in the list and display as many records as possible
- Click the **Select All** box to tick all records in the list – deselect any learners you don't wish to change
- Click the **Bulk Fill** icon on the column header
- Change the value to **Yes**
- Click **Bulk Fill**
- Click **Save**
- Click **OK**
- Click **Next >>**

4.4 Step 4 – Subject Scope

This step allows you to include any subjects which you will be offering in this option set. Subjects are grouped by and can be added by Department and/or Course in bulk or individually.

- Select your choice of subject grouping on the left – e.g. Group By Course
- Select the course required – e.g. Key Stage 4
- Tick the Key Stage 4 top level to choose all subjects
- Un-tick any subjects you don't wish to include – e.g. English, Maths, Core PE
- Click **Add >>**

The selected subjects will appear on the right hand side. Add any more subjects required.



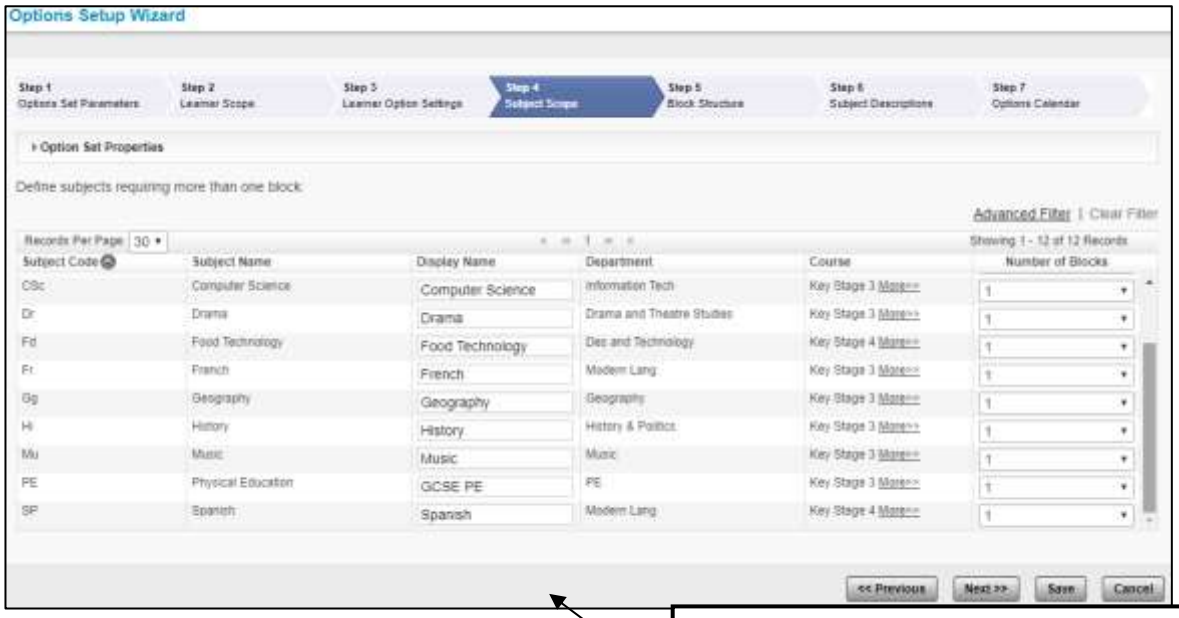
- Click **Save**
- Click **Next >>**

4.4.1 Define Subjects Requiring More Than One Block

You will next be required to specify which, if any, subjects must to be taken over more than one block – e.g. a double option subject requiring 10 periods from two option blocks rather than just 5 from one option block.

Should you have a subject which could be taken as a double option OR a single option – e.g. a sub diploma or a full diploma, then you must have two actual subject records, one with a prefix or suffix of 'single' the other 'double' with both available in both blocks so learners choose one or the other. See Appendix 1 for further instruction.

- Select the relevant value from the **Number of Blocks** drop down – e.g. BTEC Sport must be chosen in two blocks in order to deliver the full course



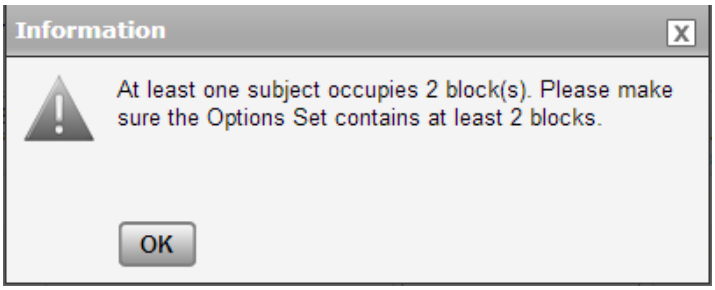
Should you wish to do so, you can change the Display Name of the subject so that it appears as you wish learners to see it.

Click in the box and re-type.

> Click **Next >>**

A message will appear advising you that you have at least one subject occupying one or more blocks.

If you have fixed blocks, you will have to ensure that you select those subjects in more than one block before you can carry on in the next screen. If you have a free list then you only choose the subject once in the list but learners will be forced to choose it in the number of blocks specified.



> Click **OK**

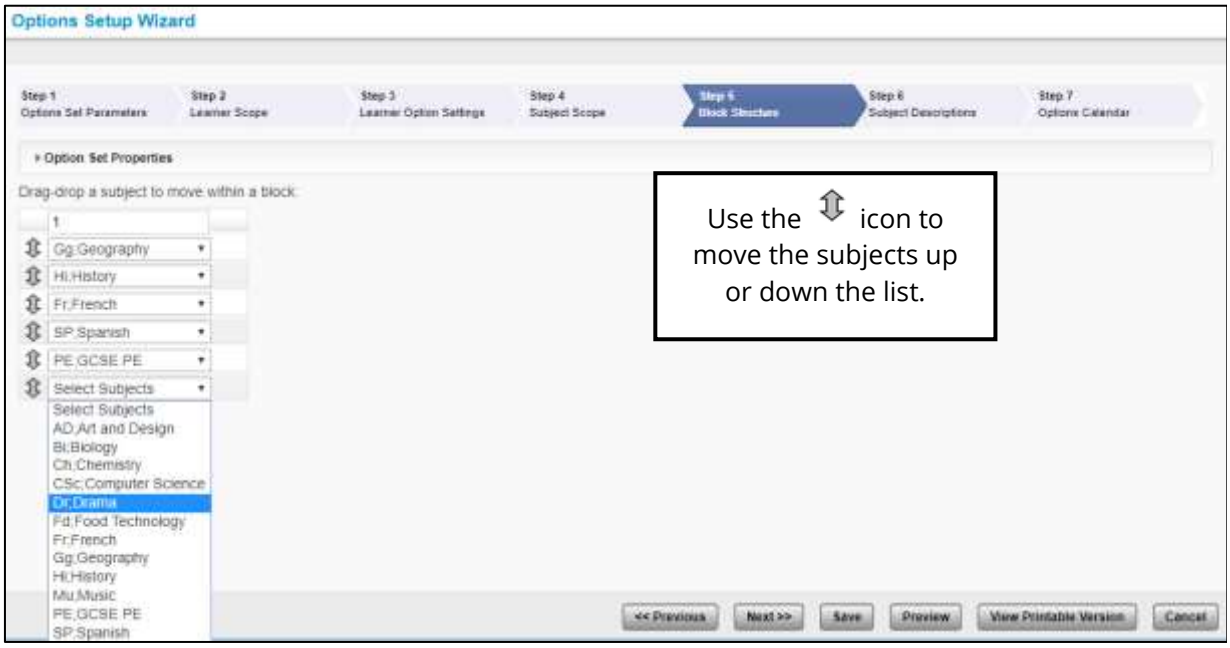
4.5 Step 5 – Block Structure

The way this step is used will depend on the initial setting of 'Free Choice' or 'Fixed Blocks' you chose on the Option Set Parameters setup. Follow whichever one of the below sections is appropriate for the setup choice you made.

4.5.1 Free List

If you chose Free List options, you will be shown one 'block' which you can fill with all of the subjects learners will be able to choose from. If you allowed a reserve choice, the 'Reserve Block' will be shown.

- Select the first subject from the drop down list box
- When you select a subject from the last box in the list, a new drop down will appear allowing you to select the next subject from the list
- Where it was specified that subjects must take up several blocks, the number of blocks they must be chosen in will show alongside the subject name



- Click **Preview** to check what will appear to the learners

- Click **Next >>**

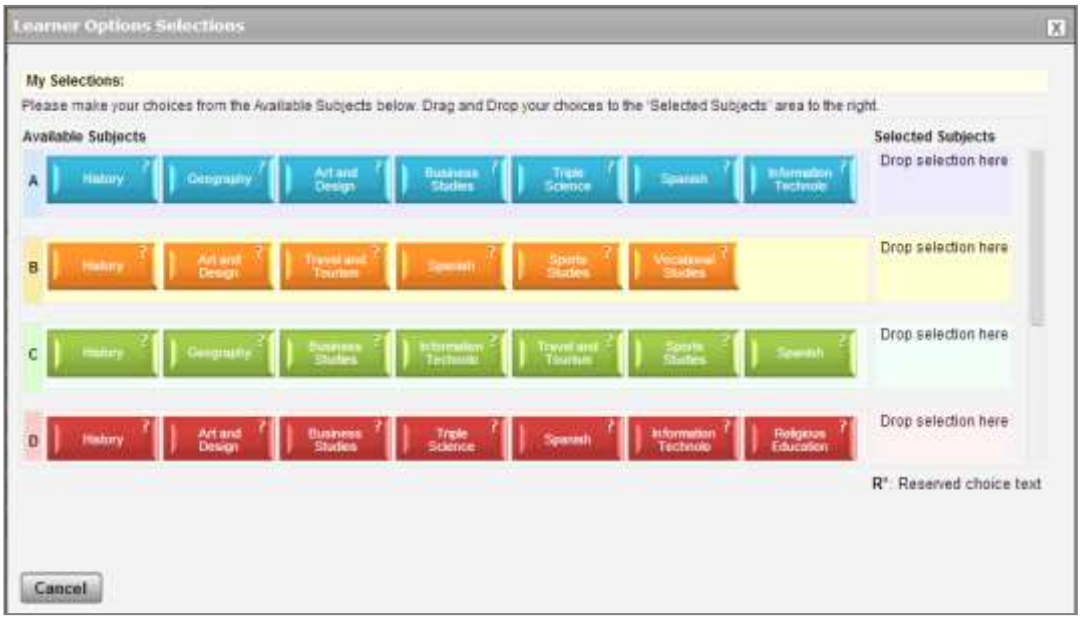
4.5.2 Fixed Blocks

If you chose fixed blocks you will initially see the amount of empty blocks you specified displayed. These are waiting for you to fill them with subjects.

> Using the drop down arrows, select the subjects you wish to make available for students to choose from in each block.
> Label each block either 1, 2, 3, 4 or A, B, C, D depending on your preferred nomenclature

If you allowed a reserve choice, you'll see the 'Reserve Block' at the end.

If you specified that any subjects must be chosen in more than once block, this will be indicated at the side of the subject when selected.



> Click **Cancel** to return to the Block Structure

- If you wish to move the order of the subjects around, use the icon to **drag and drop** up or down the list
- Click **View Printable Version** to see a report of your block structure

Note: If you specified a subject must be taken across two 2 blocks, it must be selected in 2 blocks before you can continue. Other subjects may appear in more than one block if they are popular choices which need to appear in more than one block to accommodate all choices, but they are taken in one block, not two or more.

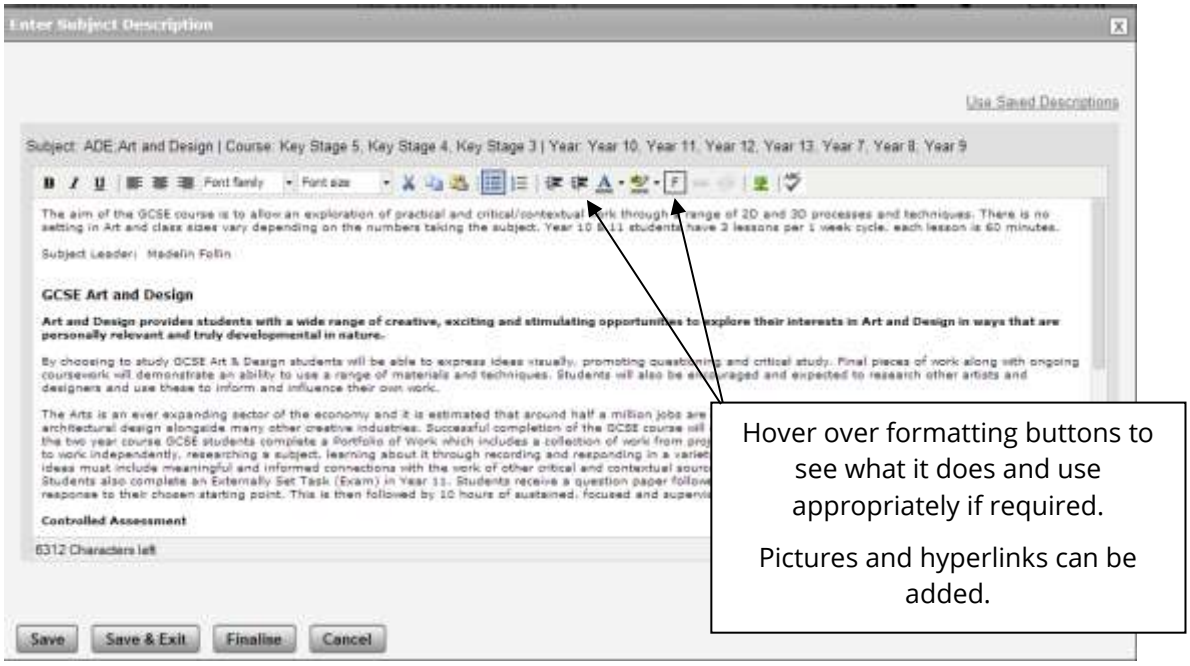
When you are happy with your selections;

- Click **Next >>**

4.6 Step 6 – Subject Descriptions

This step allows you to enter a description of each subject available, to sell it as an option choice.

- Click the **Enter Description** link
- Fill in a description of the subject – e.g. the aim of the subject, how much allocated time it will have, what students will be expected to achieve in terms of course work and examinations and also the subject leader if appropriate
- Use the options on the toolbar to format appropriately
- Click **Save** to periodically save the description
- Click **Save and Exit** to return to the list



Whilst you are working on your description, you can click **Save** or **Save & Exit**, however, it won't show as Ready until you click **Finalise**.

- Click **Finalise** when the description is ready to go (the description will only show as 'Ready' once this has been done.

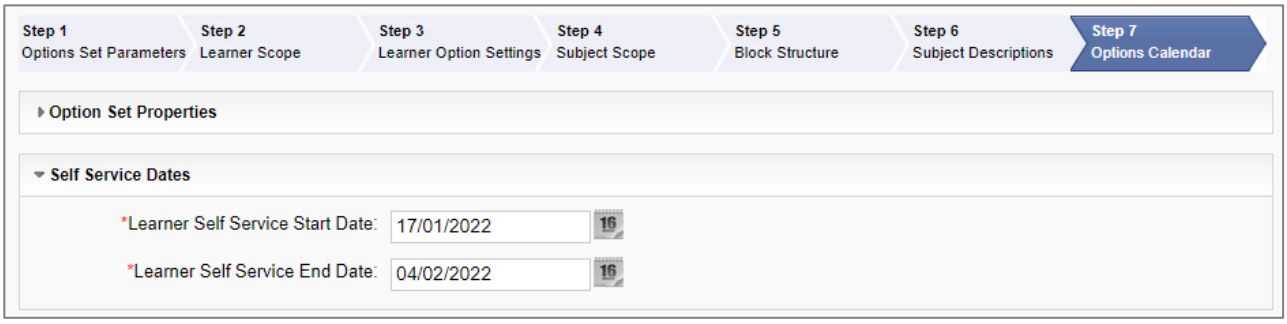
> Click the **Preview** link to check what the description and formatting looks like – you can also generate a report from here.

4.7 Step 7 – Options Calendar

This step allows you to set up dates during which learners can enter their option choices and also set notification dates. This will send SMS messages at the default time (10am), according to the SMS module being configured correctly.

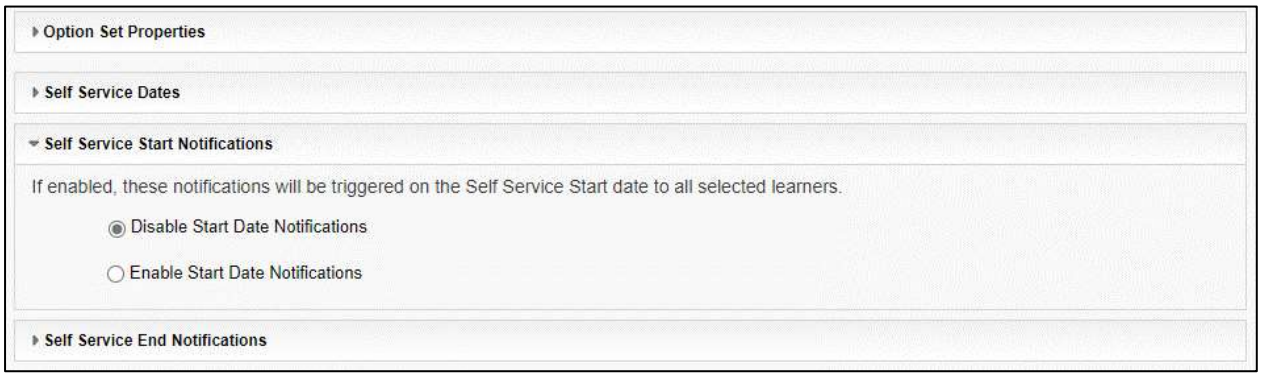
4.7.1 Self Service Dates

> Select the **Learner Self Service Start Date** – e.g. when you wish the option choices window to be made available to learners
> Select the **Learner Self Service End Date** – e.g. a deadline date for the window to close by which time learners should have made their choices



4.7.1.1 Self Service Start Notifications

> Select **Enable Start Date Notifications** if you wish them to be sent OR
> Select **Disable Start Date Notifications** if you don't wish them to be sent



4.7.1.2 Select Self Service End Notifications

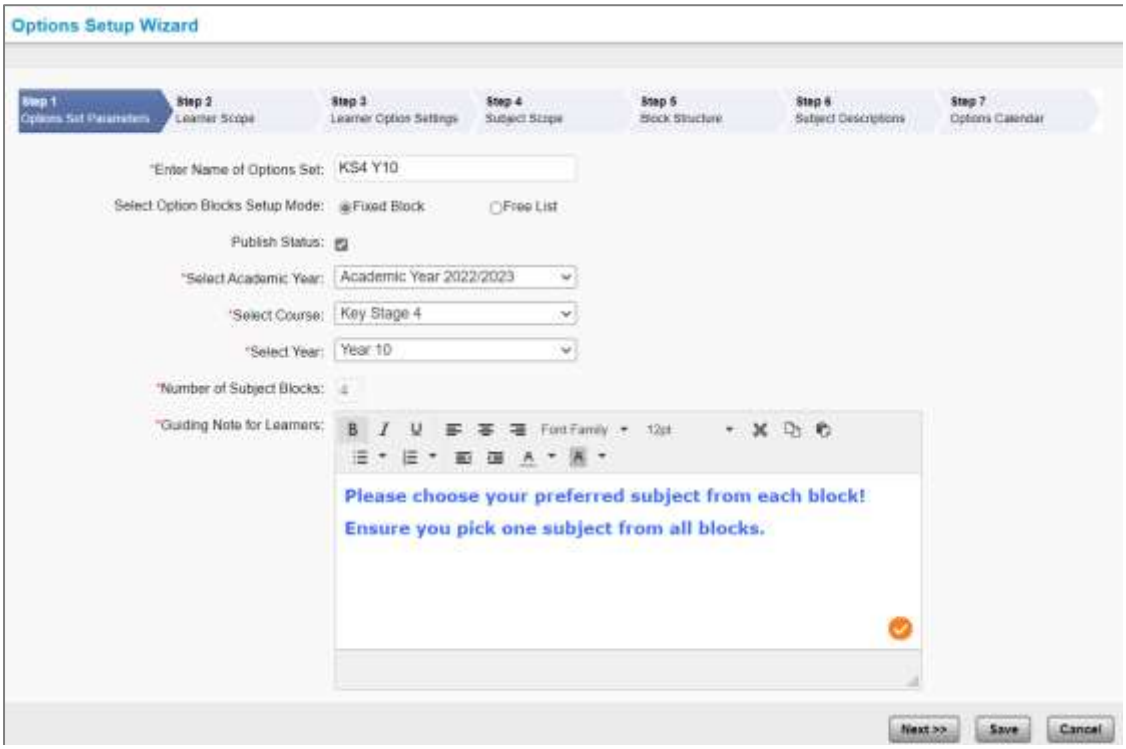
> If you don't wish to send self service end notifications, leave the **Disable End Date Notifications** radio button selected
> If you do wish to send self service notifications, select **Enable End Date Notifications** and set the rules accordingly

> Click **Save and Exit**

5 Publishing Option Sets

Once you have completed all the scope and configuration settings, the option set status should be set to Published. This will ensure that once the Self Service Start Date is reached, the Option Set will be available for learners to enter data.

> Select the radio button for the option set you wish to change to published
> Select **Edit | Option Set Parameters**
> Tick **Publish Status** on Step 1
> Click **Save**



5.1 Adding Further Option Sets

When you wish to add further option sets, select **Wizard** from the Task Panel and go through the above steps with the settings for the new Option Set.

5.2 Editing Existing Option Sets

Should you wish to edit any aspect of an existing option set or return to complete an option set you saved and exited half way through setup, navigate as below.

> Select **Learner Options | Manage Learner Options**
> Select the radio button of the Option Set you wish to Edit/Complete
> Click **Edit** and select the relevant section

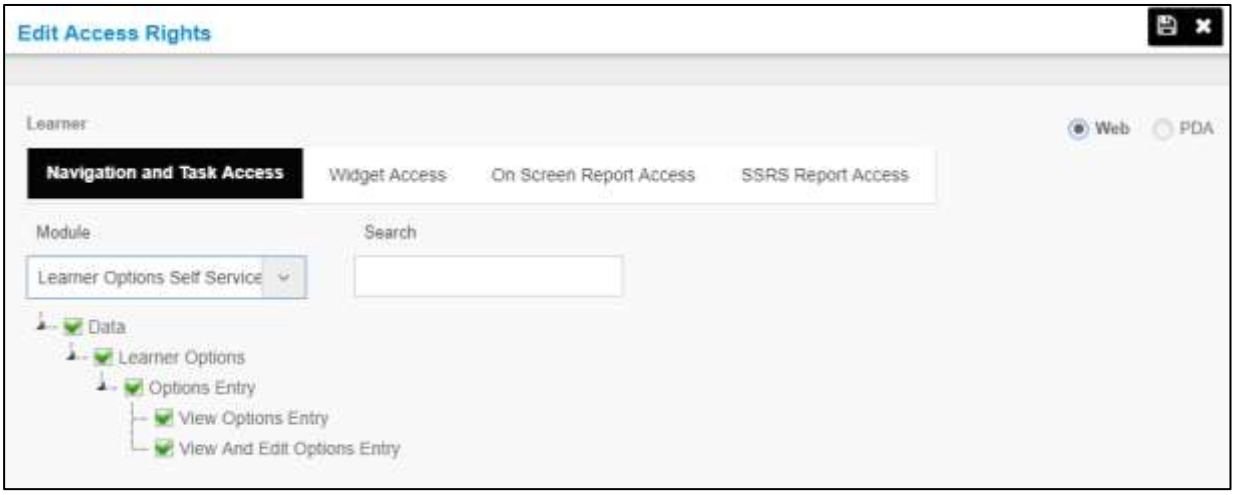
6 Learner Option Selections

Once an Option Set is published and the Self Service Open Date has been reached, learners will be able to log in to Cloud School to make their learner option choices providing you have assigned access to their role.

6.1 Learner Permissions

By default the Learner role has permission to the Self Service area, however, if you have your own user account for learners then you'll need to check permissions.

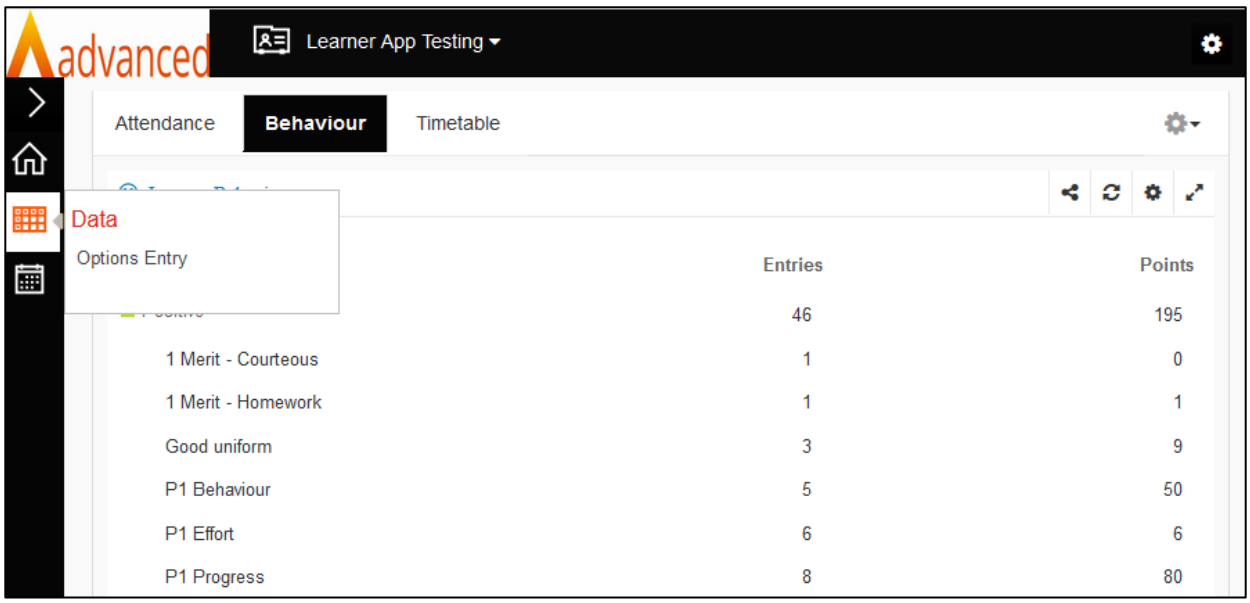
- Select **System | Roles & Access**
- Highlight the user defined Learner Role
- **Edit Access Rights**
- Select **Learner Options Self Service** from the drop down
- Select all options
- Click **Save**



6.2 Options Entry

Learners will work through a wizard, reflecting the setup choices you made, to complete their option choices.

There is no widget for Learner Options, learners need to access the wizard via the **Data** menu on the left hand side.

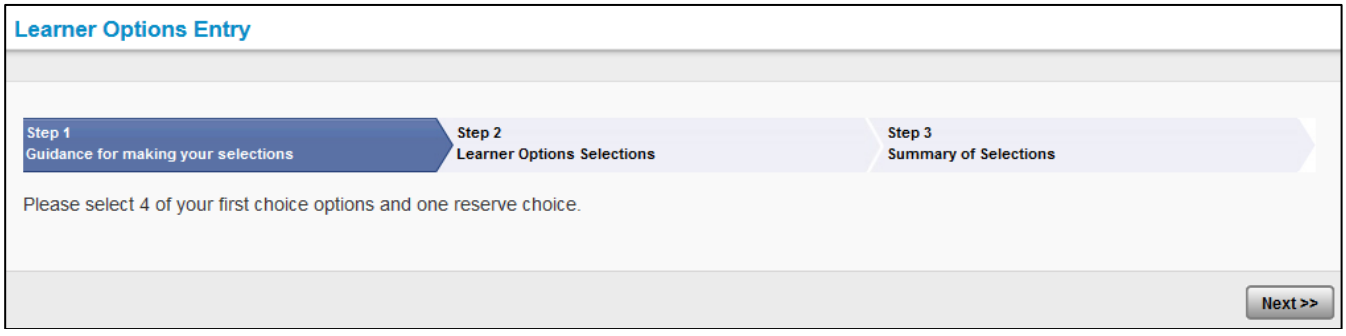


6.3 Free List Entry

If you set your options up as Free List, the following Wizard will be made available for learners to work through.

6.3.1 Step 1 – Guidance for Making Selections

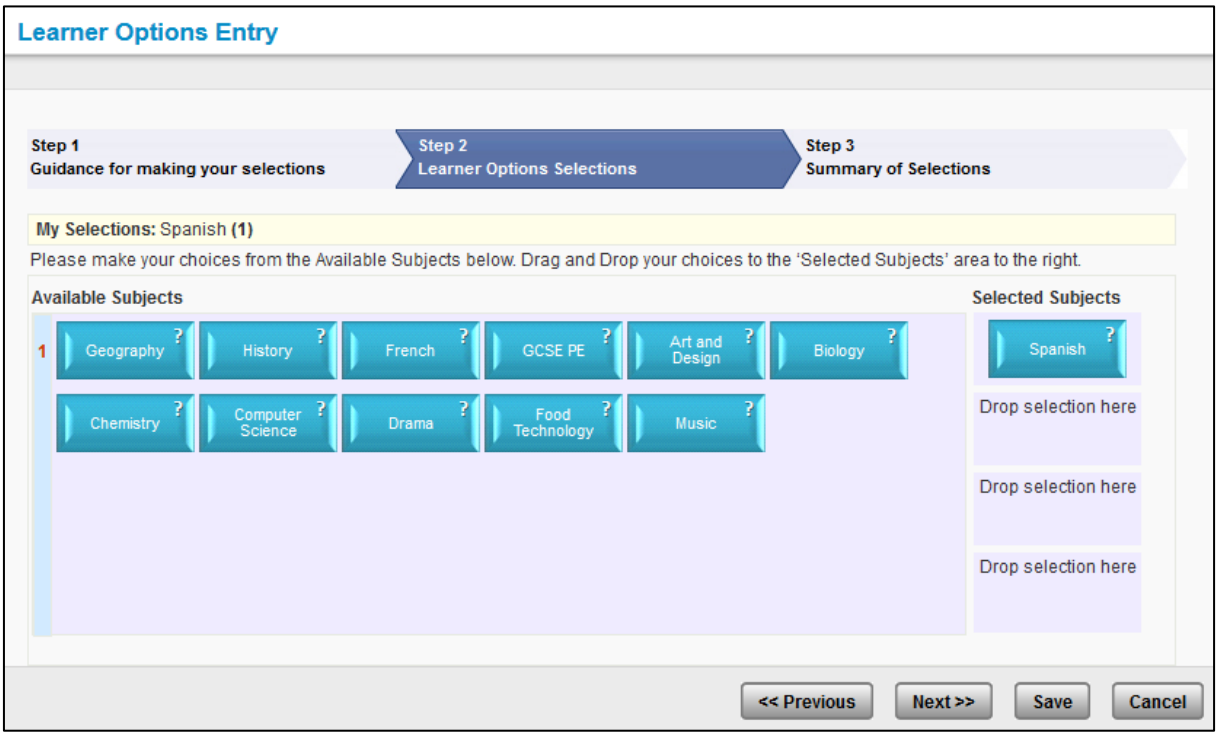
On this screen, the guidance text you filled in will appear as an instruction to learners.



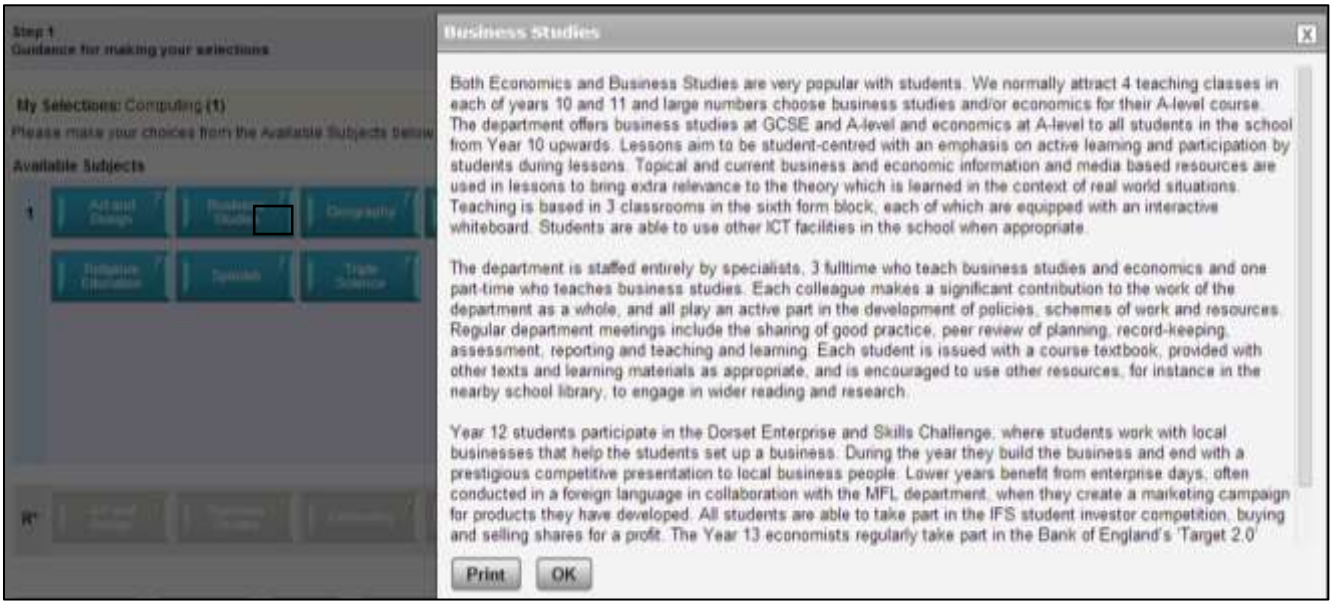
This step will show the setup of subjects you specified and the requisite amount of blocks for them to be dragged into.

- Subjects highlighted in Orange are those specified as possible 'double' option subjects taking more than one block to deliver
- The Reserve Subject block is at the bottom – if a Reserve was allowed

> **Drag and drop** the subjects in order of preference, where the first choice is in the top box



Learners can see the subject description by clicking on the ? in the top right hand corner of each subject block, they can also print the description should they wish to do so.

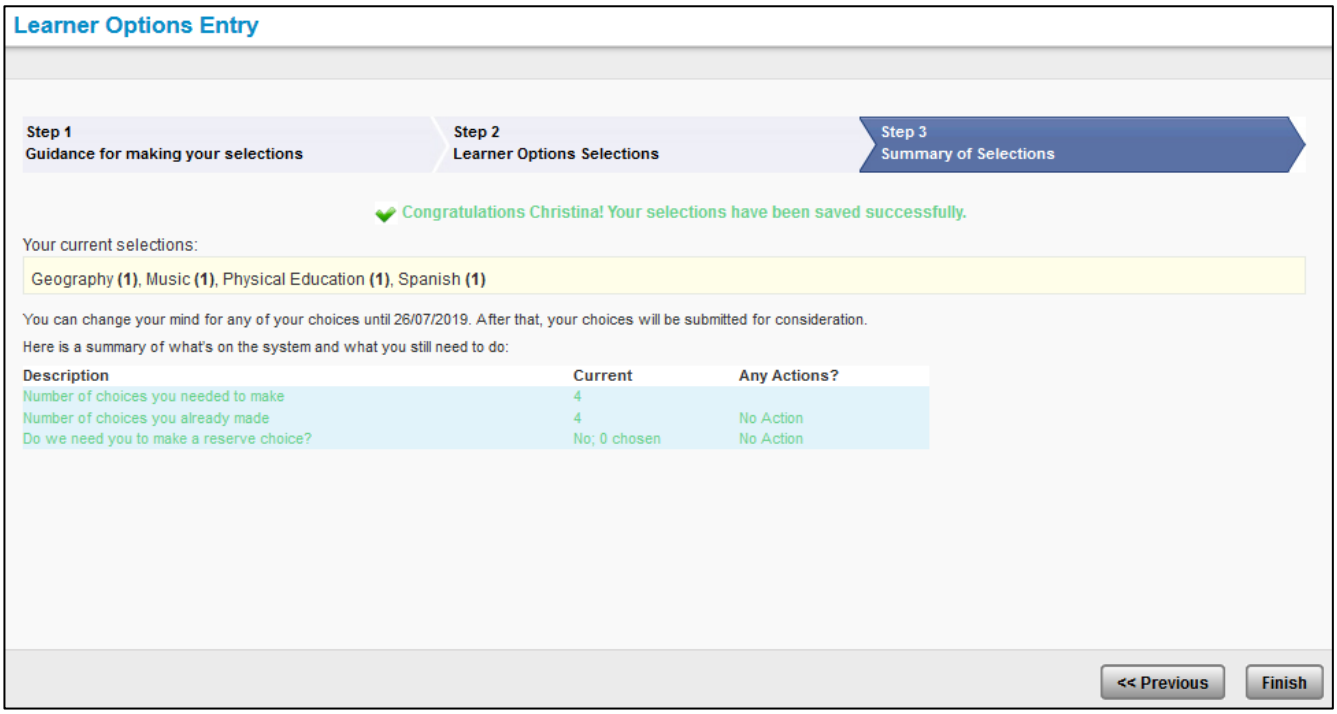


> Once all of the learners selections have been made, click **Next >>**

6.3.3 Step 3 - Summary of Selections

The final step produces a summary of selections to advise learners on which selections they have made and whether they have any outstanding actions to complete.

> Click **Finish** when complete

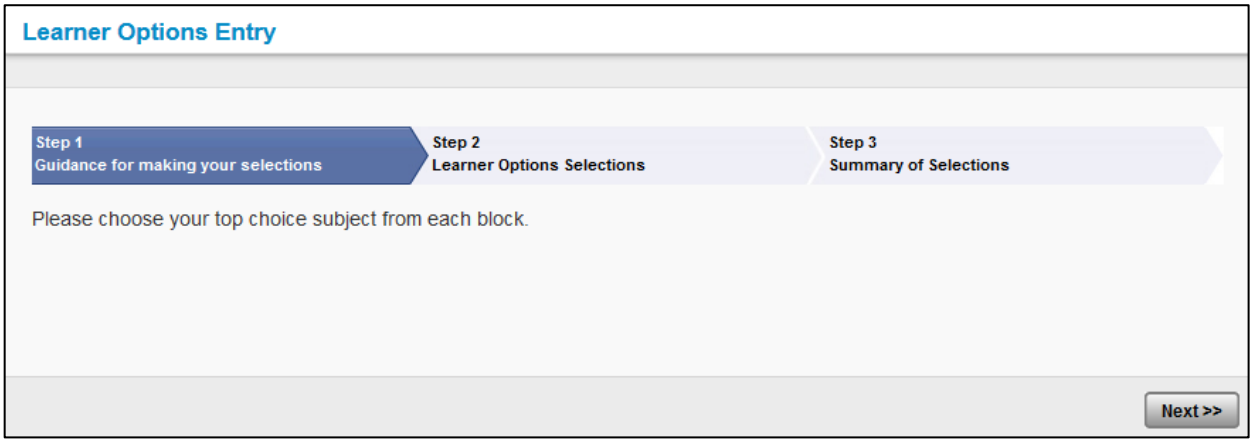


6.4 Fixed Block Entry

If you set your options up as Fixed Block, the following Wizard will be made available for learners to work through.

6.4.1 Step 1 – Guidance for Making Selections

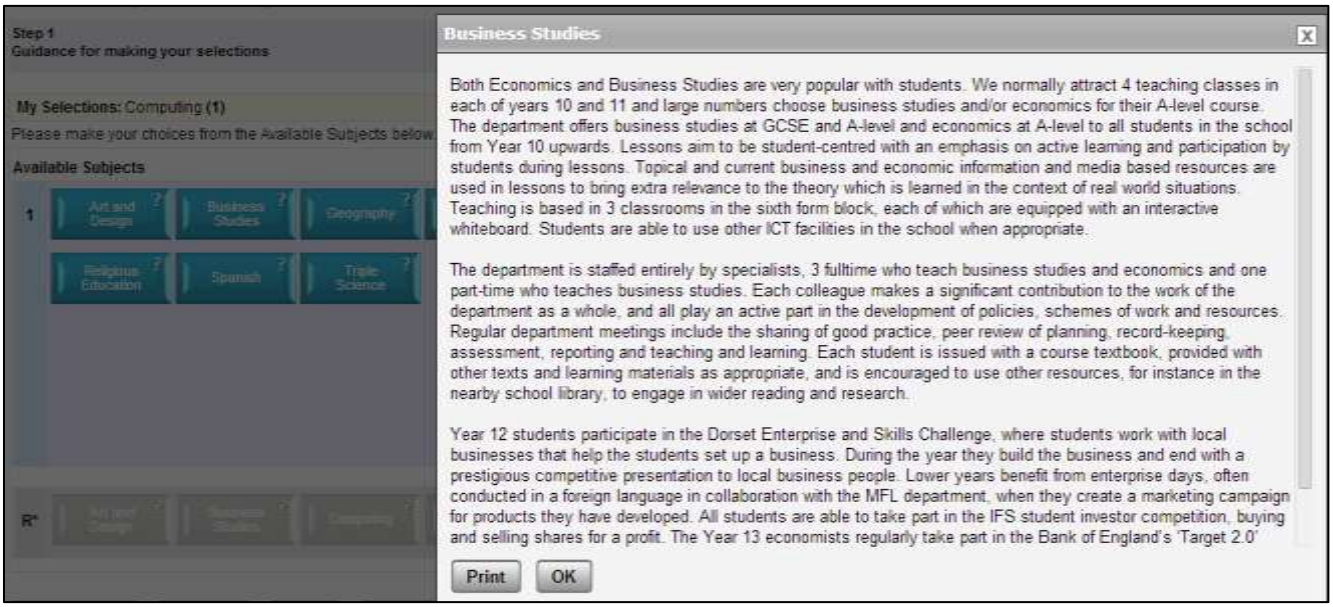
On this screen, the guidance text you filled in will appear as an instruction to learners.



This step will show the setup of subjects you specified in their appropriate blocks, and an empty space at the end of each one for a selection to be dragged into.

- The Reserve Subject block is at the bottom if Reserve was set to be allowed
- **Drag and drop** the one subject from each block

Learners can see the subject description by clicking on the ? in the top right hand corner of each subject block, they can also print the description should they wish to do so.



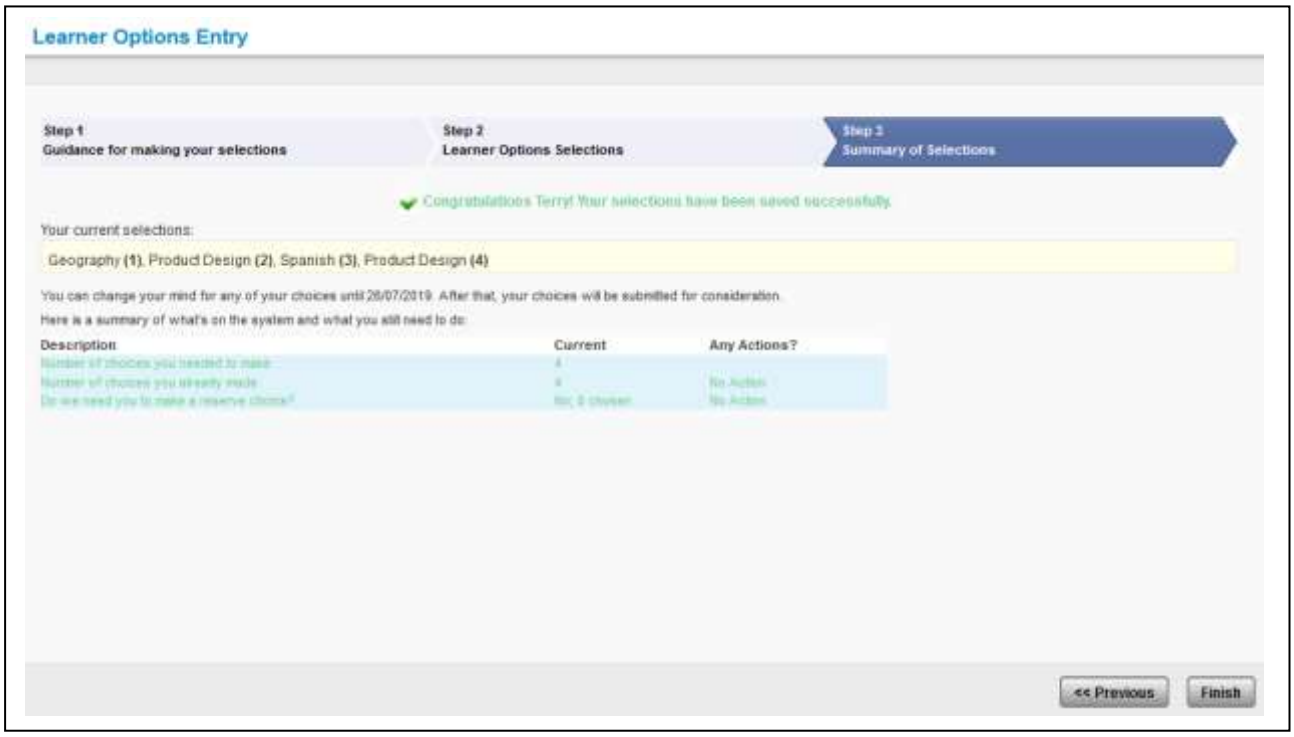
> Once all of the learners selections have been made, click **Next>>**

Note: If a learner tries to choose the same subject in two different blocks and it hasn't been specified to span several blocks, they will receive an error message. Likewise, if they choose a subject which you have specified must run over several blocks in only one of the blocks, they will receive an error message advising them to correct their choices.

6.4.3 Step 3 Summary of Selections

The final step produces a summary of selections to advise learners on which selections they have made and whether they have any outstanding actions to complete.

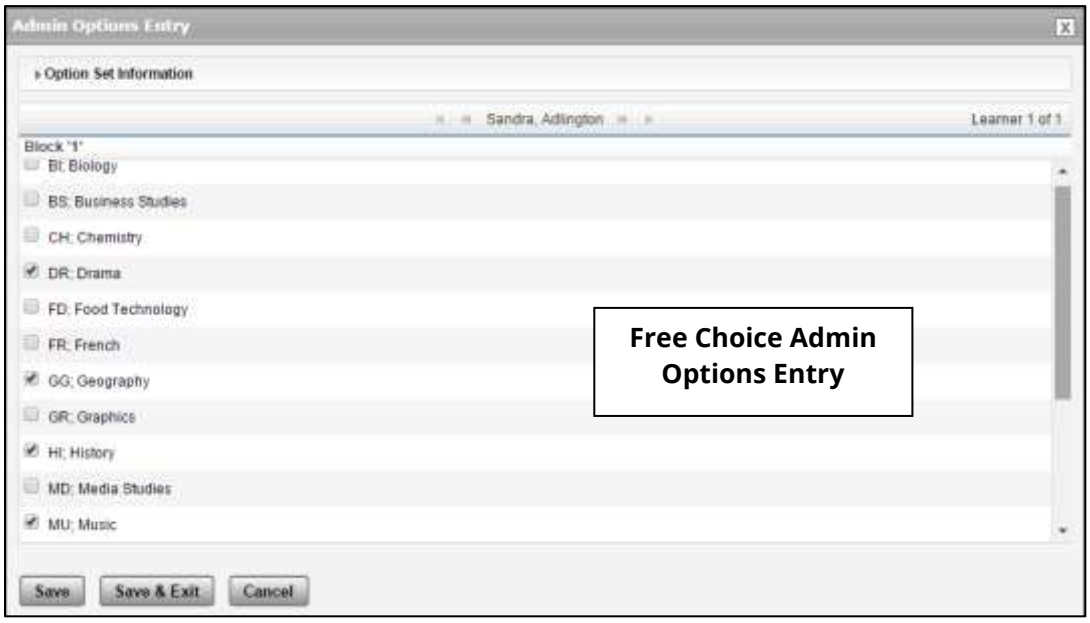
> Click **Finish** when complete

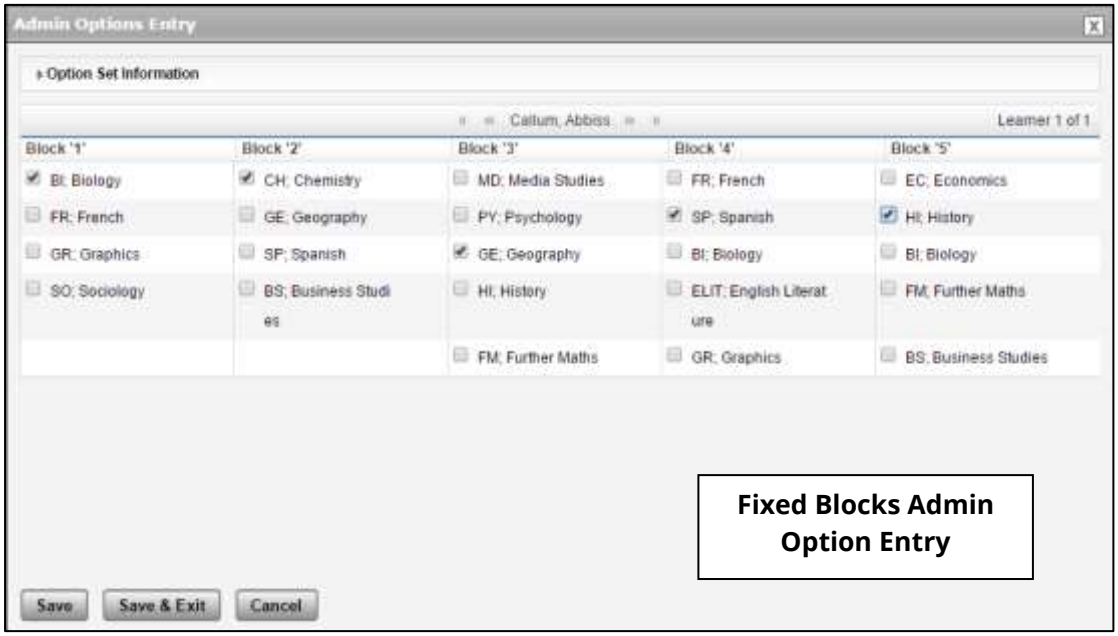


7 Manually Entering/Amending Learner Choices

If you need to amend learner choices, or enter a learner's choices for them, it is possible to do so through Manage Learner Options.

- Select Learner **Options | Manage Learner Options**
- **Edit | Learner Option Settings**
- Select the Learner you wish to add or amend choices for and click **Admin Options Entry**
- Make the appropriate changes
- Click **Save** or **Save & Exit**

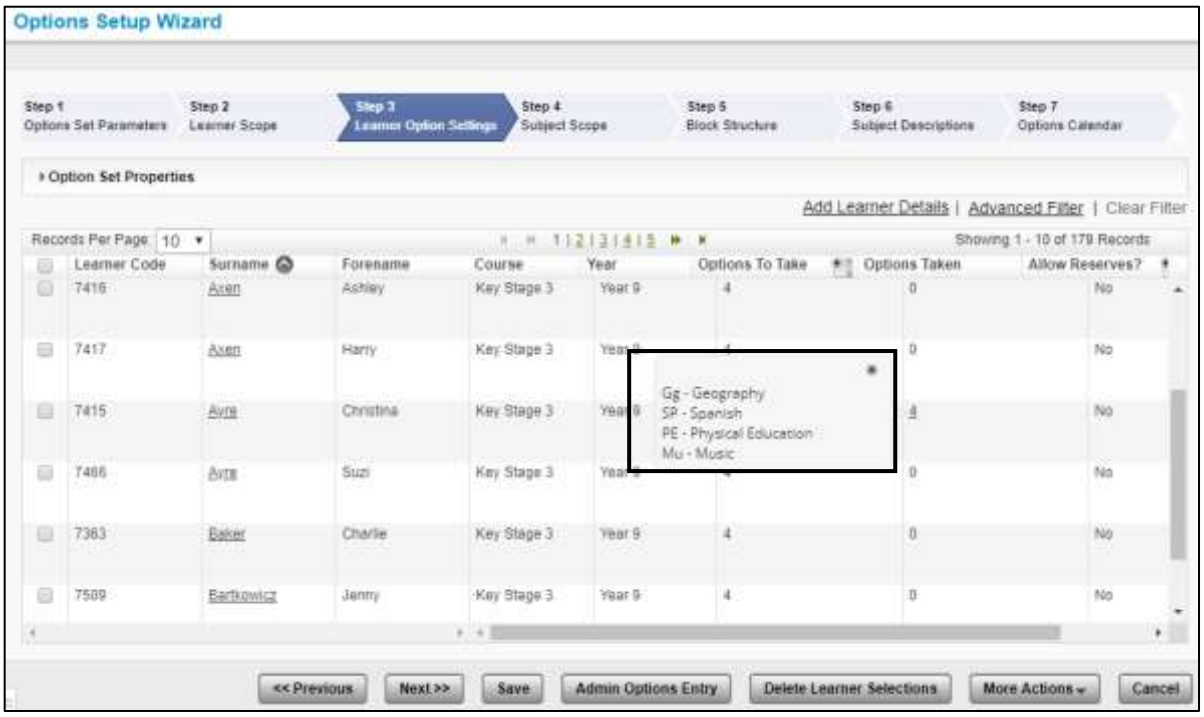




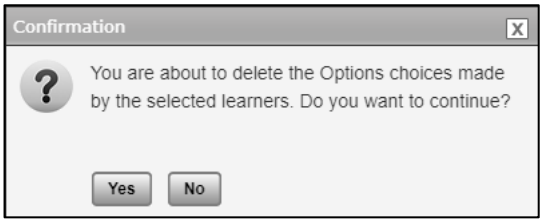
8 Clearing Learner Choices

Once learners have made their selections, you may wish to clear them so that they can choose again. You will see the Options Taken value changed where learners have made their choices.

> Select **Learner Options | Manage Learner Options**
> **Edit | Learner Option Settings**
> Click the link in the **Options Taken** column to see their choices



> Should you wish to clear the selections made by a learner or several learners, select their record(s) and
> Click **Delete Learner Selections**
> Click **OK** to the following message



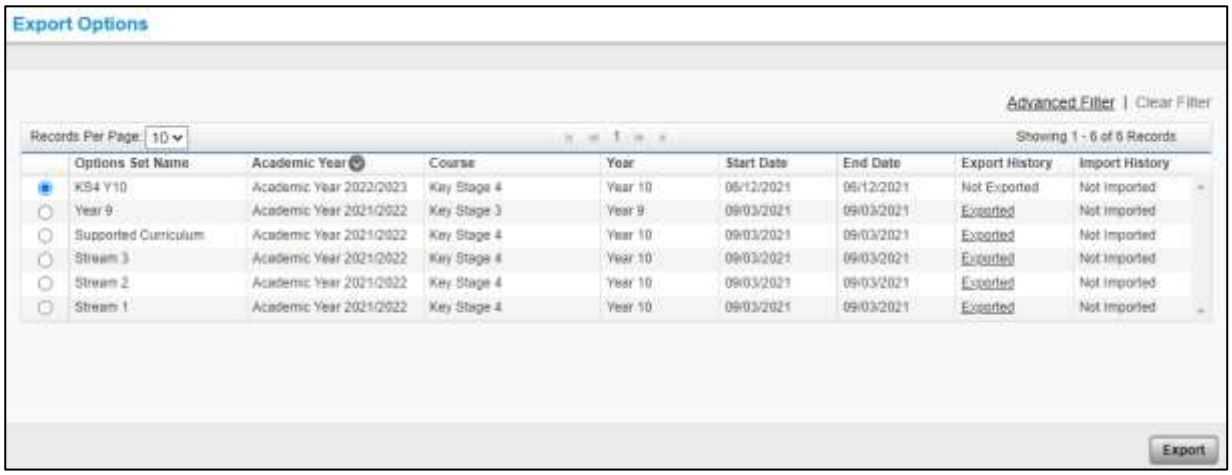
> The learner will then be able to make their selections again

9 Exporting for TimeTabler Options

Once you have setup up the data and learners have made their choices, the data needs to be exported to TimeTabler Options software for the 'number crunching' to be carried out.

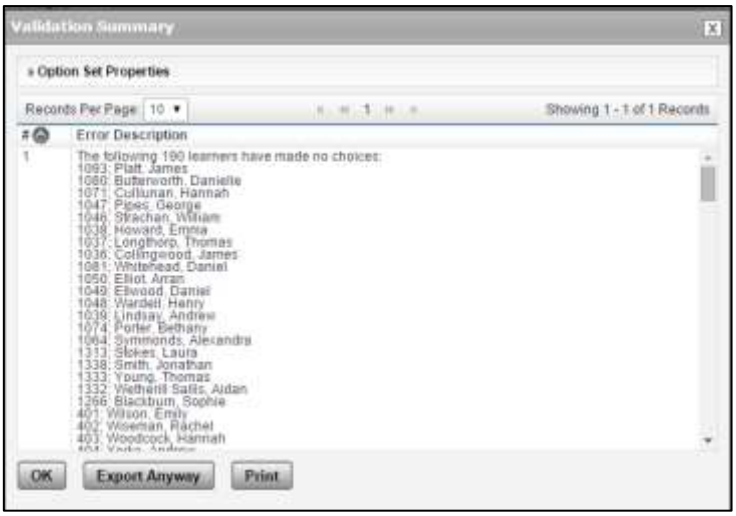
You will only be able to export option sets once the Learner Self Service End Date set up in the Options Calendar is in the past – it can be edited.

- Select **Learner Options | Export Learner Options**
- Select the Option Set(s) to be exported
- Click **Export**

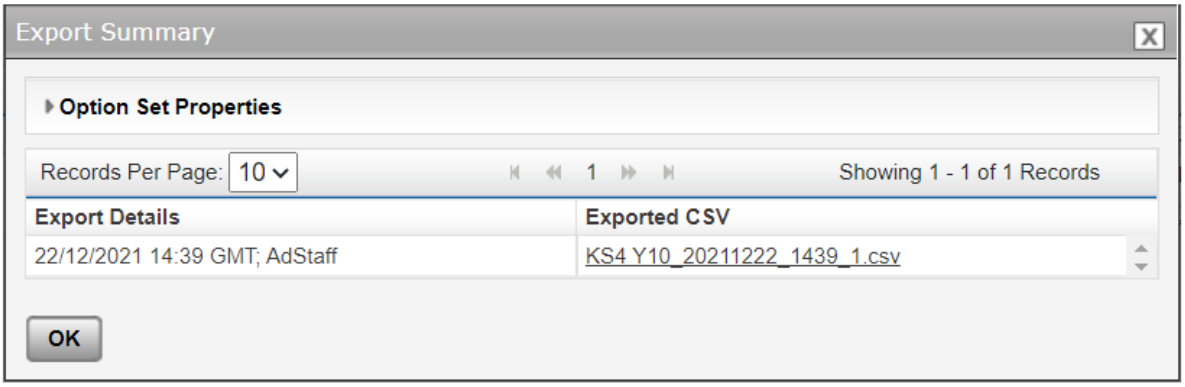


A validation summary will appear advising you of any learners who haven't made any choices.

- Click **Print** to get the list of learners you need to speak to as a directly printed or PDF'd list
- Click **OK** to return to the Option Set so you can re-open for completion if necessary
- Click **Export Anyway** if you know about all of those learners not having made choices



> An export summary will appear - click the link to **download the csv** somewhere accessible
> Click **OK**



Once you have exported and saved the csv file, you can import it into TimeTabler Options package so the data can be processed and the best fit solution learners into option blocks determined.

Follow instructions provided by TimeTabler Options to create option blocks and export a file to put back into Cloud School.

Note: use **File | Import from > Advanced Progresso / Cloud School** to import your file for use in **TimeTabler Options**.

Once TimeTabler has created option blocks you are happy with, use **File > Export to MIS > Advanced Progresso / Cloud School** to get the txt file you need to create populated option teaching groups in Cloud School.

10 Importing

Once you have used TimeTabler Options, you need to import the file to update Cloud School – you are guided through this process by a wizard. Teaching groups for the new academic year's option blocks can be created from the import.

> Select **Learner Options | Import Learner Options**

10.1 Step 1: Import Details

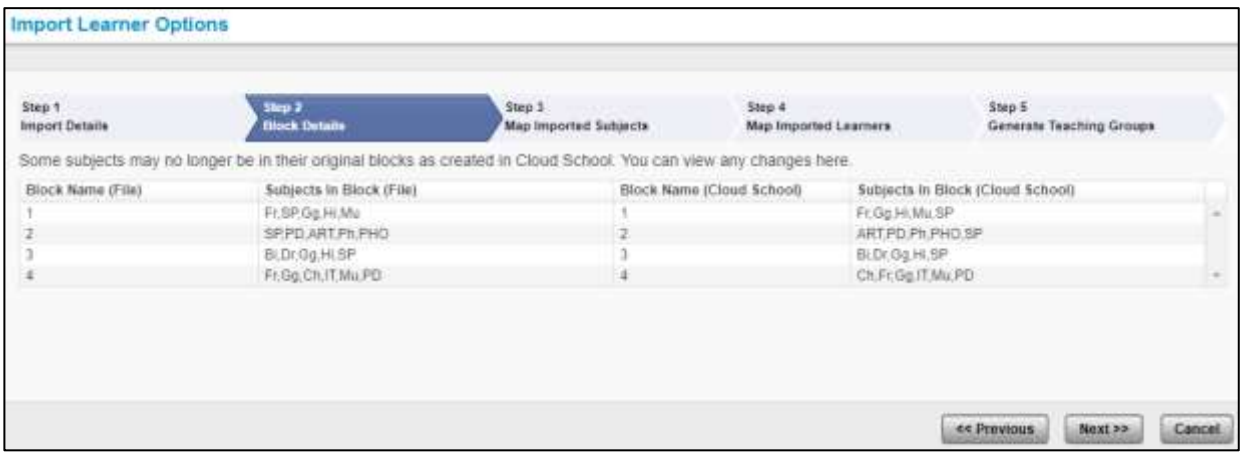
> Click **Choose File** and browse to the file to be imported
> Select the option set it matches from the list – e.g. KS4 to KS4
> Click **Next >>**

10.2 Step 2: Block Details

What you see on this step will depend if you chose free list or fixed block for the option setup.

10.2.1 Fixed Block

This screen gives information on any changes made to the block structure. On the left you'll see the block structure in the file being imported from TimeTabler Options and on the right you'll see the block structure as it was originally setup in Cloud School.



The subjects included in each block are listed – 9 are shown by default, any more can be seen by clicking the More >> link.

10.2.2 Free List

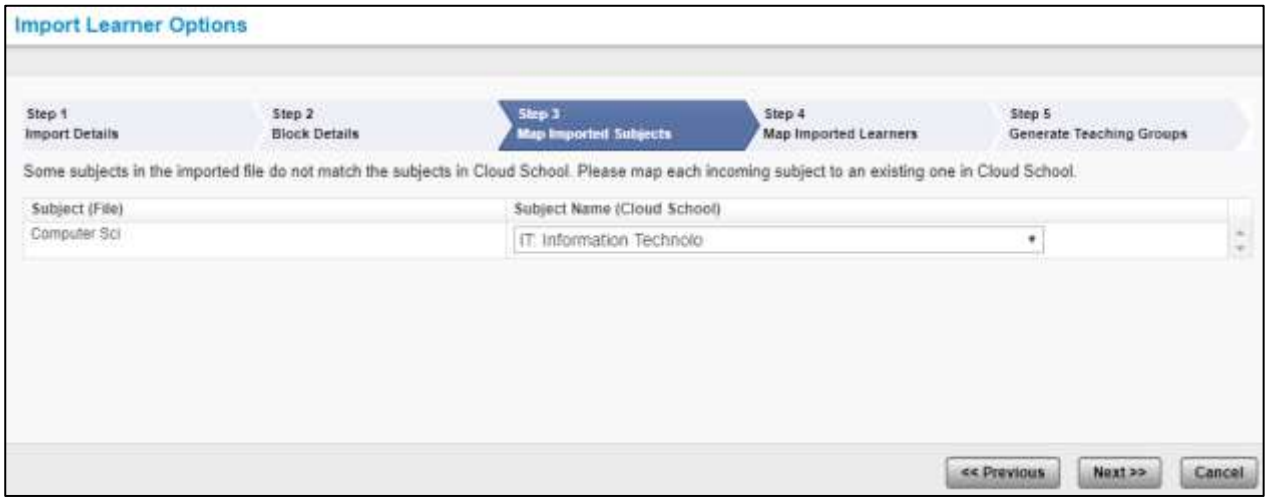
You'll see the block code and the subjects which have been put into each block listed and be able to see how each block will be created.

- If all is as you expect, click **Next >>**
- To return to the previous step click **<< Previous**
- To cancel the import **click Cancel**

10.3 Step 3: Map Imported Subjects

This screen will show any subjects which have been used in the TimeTabler Options file but weren't in the Cloud School subject scope setup. These subjects must be mapped to the subjects in Cloud School before you can continue.

- **Map** the subjects by choosing the correct one from the drop down list on the right

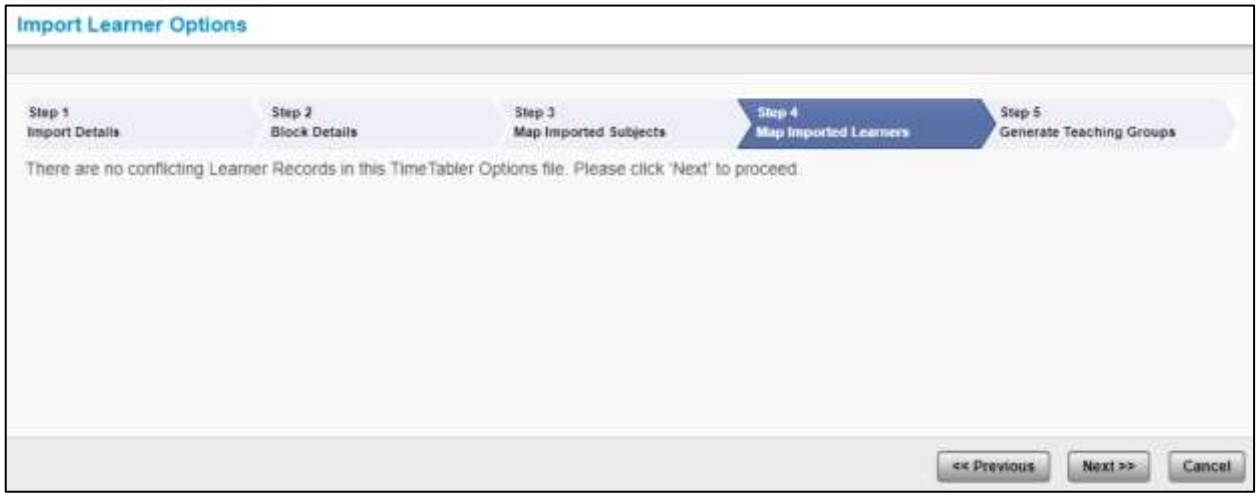


10.4 Step 4: Map Imported Learners

This step shows any discrepancies between learners in the file from TimeTabler Options and the learners in Cloud School. Learners are matched on Forename, Surname, UPN and Gender and pulled up if none of the fields match.

The learner in the TimeTabler Options file will be on the left – suggested matches will be on the right.

- If there is more than one suggested match, click on the Find Match hyperlink. A list of suggested matches will be shown – choose the correct one and click **OK**.
- If there are no mismatches a message advising you there are no mismatches will be displayed.
- Click **Next >>**



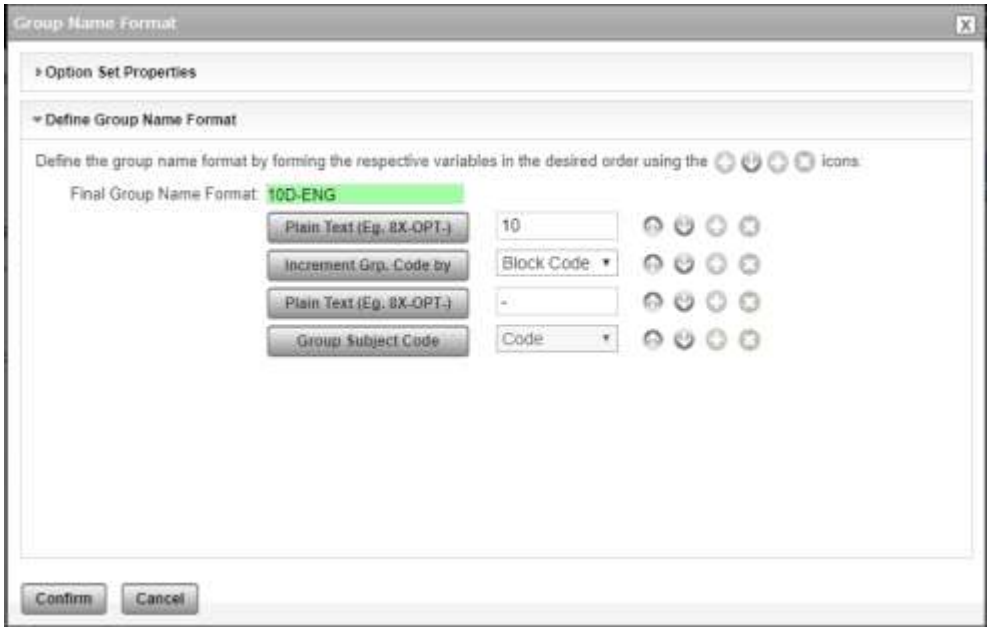
10.5 Step 5: Generate Teaching Groups

This final step allows you to trigger the generation of teaching groups from the TimeTabler Options file. The screen has two main sections;

10.5.1 Teaching Group Defaults

Use this to bulk fill the Start and End Dates, the course and year and the format for the Name and Code of the teaching groups.

- Select the **Start Date** – ensure this is equal to or greater than the start date of your timetable source
- Select the **Finish Date** – ensure this is equal to or before the end date of your timetable source
- Select the **Course** - e.g. KS4
- Select the **Year** – e.g. 10
- Click the **Edit Group Name Format** to determine the code format of your groups



To activate an element you must click the symbol

Dark grey elements will appear in the final code, those in lighter grey will be excluded.

There are some options for free text, you can include the block code and also increment groups by number or letter (e.g. if there are two Geography groups in option A, you will get 10-AGg1, 10-AGg2).

Group codes must be unique, can be a maximum of 15 characters long, group names a maximum of 50 characters long.

- Click **Confirm**

You will be taken back to the initial screen with an example of the group code in the box.

The next section will only be activated when you click **Apply**.

10.5.2 Teaching Group Details

There are further options here to bulk change the details again, using the bulk change icon on column headings and also edit group details individually in line.

The groups will be shown as per the default settings but can be changed in bulk or individually as required before final generation. The Start Date, End Date and Course/Year columns all have bulk fill options.

- Click **Generate Teaching Groups** and groups will be generated as per the details in the list
- Learners will be associated with the groups as per the TimeTabler Options file.
- If there are validation errors, you must correct all of them before groups will be generated
- If there are no errors, the groups will be created – click **OK** and you will be directed to the **Edit Teaching Groups** window.
- You'll need to apply a filter to find the future groups if created with a future date, as they won't yet be considered active.

11 Appendix 1

11.1 Data Preparation

Before you begin the options process in Cloud School, you need to have setup/prepared the following data. This is data which must also be setup in preparation for entering a timetable for the new academic year – the options process and the timetable are obviously very closely linked as the option blocks appear on and often take up a significant percentage of the timetable!

You only need to complete the following in Cloud School to start the Options process;

- Define a new academic year
- Academic Progression – Course Year Mapping and Course Year Promotion only
- Set up Subjects
- Map subjects to courses

Guidance on all of these processes can be found in the Cloud School Resource Centre.

11.2 Setting Up Subjects

When setting up subjects, consider any subjects which you may be offering as a double option – e.g. a course will take two blocks to deliver the full content so a learner must select that subject in both blocks.

That subject may be running as a diploma and sub-diploma option so you may have learners who only take it in one block to complete the lesser course, and other learners who take it in both blocks. Therefore, the groups will be different, some learners will be in both but others will only be in one of the two.

In order to set this up in the option blocks, you must have one record for the subject as a double option and a separate record for the subject as a single option. For example;

Performing Arts Subsidiary Diploma = PA-SUBDIP
Performing Arts Diploma = PA-DIP

These would be two separate subject records. When setting up the option blocks, for a free list, both can be available with the one requiring more time specified as appearing in 2 blocks. For fixed blocks, both records available in both blocks, with learners choosing either block for the single option or the double option.

11.3 Fixed Blocks – An Explanation

Also sometimes known as 'faculty' or 'homogenous' blocks these blocks are typically structured to group subjects with a similar content methodology or skill. For example, learners would choose from a Humanities block, a Technology block and a Humanities block.

This type of block is advantageous in terms of ensuring learners pick a balanced curriculum, it also means teachers are teaching in teams making scheduling easier in lower years and means that setting can be done where required (in a languages block for example).

There are however some disadvantages of utilising this type of structure entirely.

The learner satisfaction rate achieved is likely to be lower as learners don't get a free choice of subjects. It also means that to run them you need to have enough resources to put on several groups which can cause issues with blocks housing technology subject.

To keep the advantages of this type of block but to try and alleviate some of the difficulties you may experience with full year homogenous blocks by having half year option blocks which would reduce the resource required at any one time. You could also look at having some fixed blocks and one block which offers a larger variety of subjects to offer more choice from that block.

11.4 Free List – An Explanation

Also known as 'free choice' or 'heterogeneous' blocks, this type of option choice block arranges subjects around learner choices with the aim of achieving a high satisfaction rate.

This type of option block is advantageous in terms of learner satisfaction and is therefore an attractive method.

However, this style of option blocks setup can also come with some disadvantages. The composition of subjects in each option block may allow a learner to choose an unbalanced curriculum. If this is the case, you may need to consider applying some rules to learner choices to ensure that they pick at least one language, one humanities subject etc. and then check to ensure that rules have been followed.

It may also cause scheduling difficulties later down the line if the staffing is not thought out carefully – for example, if language teachers are spread across several blocks, it is likely to be difficult to find them available at the same time if they are teaching together in blocks lower down the school.