

Timetable Best Practise

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Timetabling – Best Practise

The Perfect Timetable

- Students get all their options
- Teachers have classes they desire
- All teachers have their correct load
- Teachers have all their classes in their designated room
- Class sizes are balanced and manageable
- Rooms are used efficiently
- The curriculum is delivered
- There is a mixture of morning and afternoon periods for each class
- Non-contact time is evenly spread for teachers
- Part-timers have their classes blocked
- The timetable is easily understood and easy to modify

What to do now

1 Planning

- 1.1 General Meetings to discuss structure – includes Management, HoD's, curriculum committee.
- 1.2 Departmental Meetings to discuss choices and items raised from 1.1.
- 1.3 Produce a booklet of courses.
- 1.4 Presentation to students and caregivers to discuss options.
- 1.5 Settle on a timetable team.

2 Preparation

- 2.1 Collect option sheets.
- 2.2 Enter option sheets.
- 2.3 Check options for suitability. Counsel students if required.
- 2.4 Decide number of classes and subjects to cull.
- 2.5 Ask HOD's for their preferred staffing.
- 2.6 Check on requirements of part-timers.
- 2.7 Record other restrictions eg rooming, timing etc.

3 Building

- 3.1 Enter teacher restrictions/requirements
- 3.2 Enter structural restrictions and consider the order of the option lines through the timetable cycle. e.g. Monday P1 is A, Monday P2 is B, etc, as well as which lines the juniors will use throughout the year. e.g. Term 1, Y9, C & D, Term 2 Y9, I & J, etc.
- 3.3 Decide on acceptable clash number based on schools size, i.e. the bigger the school the smaller the clash percentage.
- 3.4 Build option lines.
- 3.5 Test different option combinations for best fit.
- 3.6 Check class sizes and balance.
- 3.7 Confirm teacher classes are ok.
- 3.8 Check critical rooming.
- 3.9 Decide how to handle student clashes.

4 Completion

- 4.1 Decide on option placements during the week.
- 4.2 Insert the 'extras' e.g. PED, Music etc.
- 4.3 Complete rooming.
- 4.4 Confirm junior classes.
- 4.5 Do a full room and class clash check.
- 4.6 Publish and be damned !!

Building a timetable (the detail)

5 Order of Tasks

- 5.1 Enter Student subject choices using the Student Editor
- 5.2 Print out the subject numbers (via View) and hand to the person who decides on the number of classes to run
- 5.3 These class numbers are then handed to the Department HOD's to decide on their preferred staffing
- 5.4 The staffing is entered into the Teacher Editor
- 5.5 The basic timetabling structure is confirmed, eg. 4 half year options at year 9 along with your restrictions
- 5.6 Enter the Maker (option lie creator) program and enter your restrictions via the masking process and then 'run' (build lines)
- 5.7 If the lines are unsatisfactory then check your masks and rerun. If the lines appear reasonable then leave the Maker. (There should be NO need to return)
- 5.8 Check the Teacher Editor for any problems and if necessary, make corrections
- 5.9 Check the Option Editor for class balances and if necessary, make corrections
- 5.10 Fine-tune using the 'What If?' tool (in conjunction with 'Clash Analysis') for finding alternative places for subjects in your lines. 'Who is free?' in the Option Editor allows you to balance lines while also reducing clashes. 'Who Else?' is excellent for class balancing
- 5.11 When you are satisfied with the lines PIN all student subjects, save your results and from the TAS Main Menu, choose 'Transfer' to send your data over to the Timetable Editor

For a detailed timetabling guide download our detailed Timetabling notes from the Document Library on our website.

Checklist - What You Need as a Timetabler

- A dedicated room which can be locked if necessary
- A filter person to remove unnecessary information/requests before they reach you
- Fast computer connected to the network with large/multiple monitor/s
- A dedicated area in the staff room where you can pin notices about the timetable
- White board/pin board/to hold notes and ideas?
- Access to a Local Printer
- Some power to make decisions - rapid access to critical decision makers
- Time allowance - 2 to 3 hours per week over a year
- Release time to attend training courses
- Buddy system with another school
- A telephone line available with toll permissions by your computer
- Fast Internet access with sufficient network rights
- An apprentice
- A method to file incoming documentation and requests - as a check list and for your protection against disputes
- A senior admin person to share the responsibility with you if problems occur – you don't carry the can
- Ability for others to check your work
- Recognition for your efforts when the timetable is presented
- Recognition that the timetable is not static and requires ongoing maintenance
- Demand 'all requests in writing' - a TT request form would be useful
- Access to policies which prioritise the constraints and clearly spell out any relevant school philosophies. These should cover issues like
 - ♦ Criteria for accepting/rejecting classes
 - ♦ Dealing with under/overloaded teachers
 - ♦ Rooming issues
 - ♦ Staff who are in more than one department
- All constraints are public unless approved by the senior management not to be. A policy is required re room ownership. Teachers must be prepared to move and that they do not 'own' a room
- Produce a timetable calendar - showing key events for the production schedule and maintenance of your timetable