GCSE Options

OVERVIEW

The GCSE Options module is designed to aid you in **building your timetable** and **configuring your option blocks** to make the best fit for as many of your students as possible (based on your **banding** if applicable to your process).

Use the Options module to collect students' options choices, generate option blocks, move blocks to see the impact, replicate your design for a range of factors and build the most cost-effective model.

Create your classes in your MIS using the model from your Options module.

Housekeeping

To ensure your data is current, we recommend beginning afresh each cycle. For example:

If the students who will be completing their GCSE Options choices this year already exist on your A+ system from another season (perhaps Year 7 Admissions from 2 years ago)...

Run an export of all their data into a CSV via Data > Export so you can download and keep a copy to refer to if needed

Contact us to request a bulk deletion of their old data from your A+ system

Import the students into A+ from your MIS, so they will be able to proceed with completing your Options form

How to see your new form

Click on the blue wording in the upper left of your dashboard and then click "forms area/multiple forms"





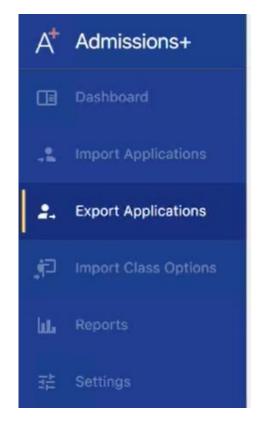
Your forms area will appear and will look something like this:

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ar 9 2023/2024		Options 2022/2023 /year12	
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-Z-25 MO E0 22		.Z. 1909 M 994 M 10	

Your new form will already have been created for you (cloned from your previous cycle) and you will see it in this area.

Turn the toggle switch on to make it active - it needs to be active to enable importing/exporting with your MIS.





Click to open your new form and you can then begin configuring your options process!

The first step will be to import your Year 9 (or Year 8) students into your system, from your MIS. **The process for this depends on your MIS** but here is an overview, and a link to the relevant guide.

For SIMS: log into the A+ SIMS App and select the option to "Export Applications". You can then select the correct Year Group and choose which form in your Admissions+ system you would like to export them to.

For cloud-based MIS (Bromcom, Arbor, iSAMS) navigate to data > import.

Year 9 Import Guide

Data

mports

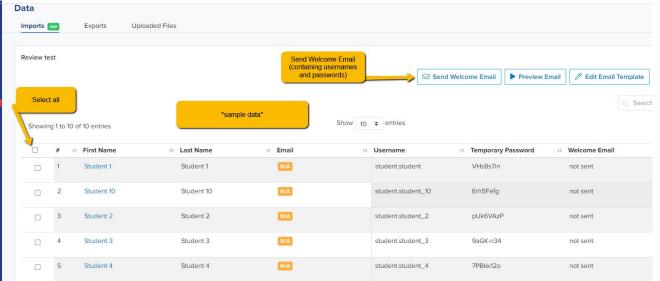
Exports

Uploaded Files

Once your students have been added to your system, they will show in your **Imports** area.

Here, you can view their email addresses and passwords and when the time comes (later in this guide) you can send the welcome email to them all so they can log in and select their options choices.



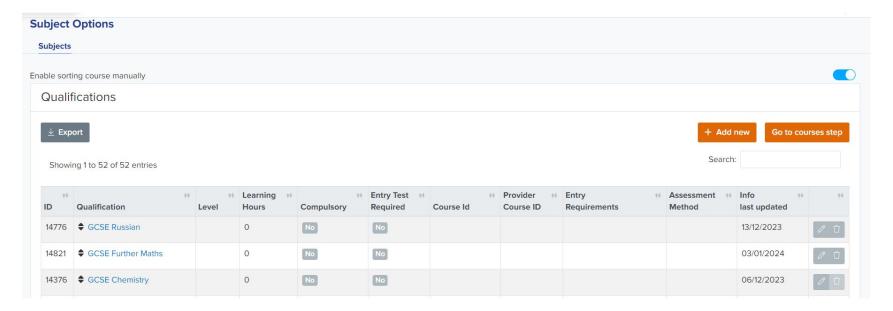


You should also check your **subject list**, to ensure the correct subjects are available to use within your options model.

If this is your second cycle, your subjects will have copied over from last year.

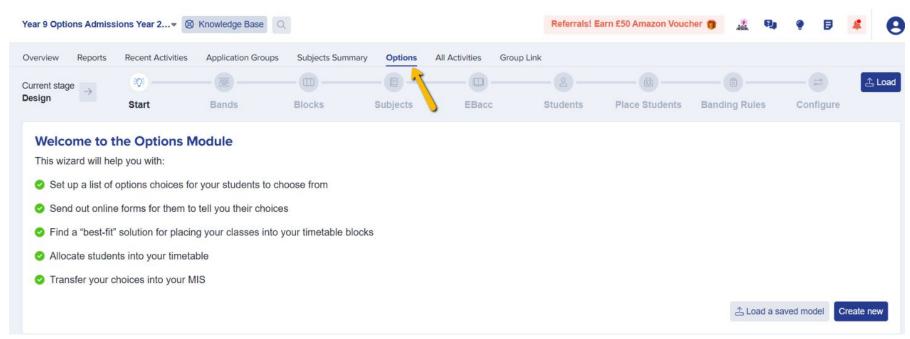
If this is your first cycle, you will need to add your subjects into your form and will have been prompted to do so as part of your onboarding tasks.

To see your subjects and make any changes, including adding and deleting, navigate to **settings > subject options > subjects.**



DESIGN STAGE

To begin the wizard, navigate to the **Options** tab on the main dashboard.

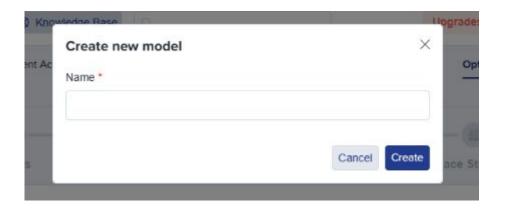


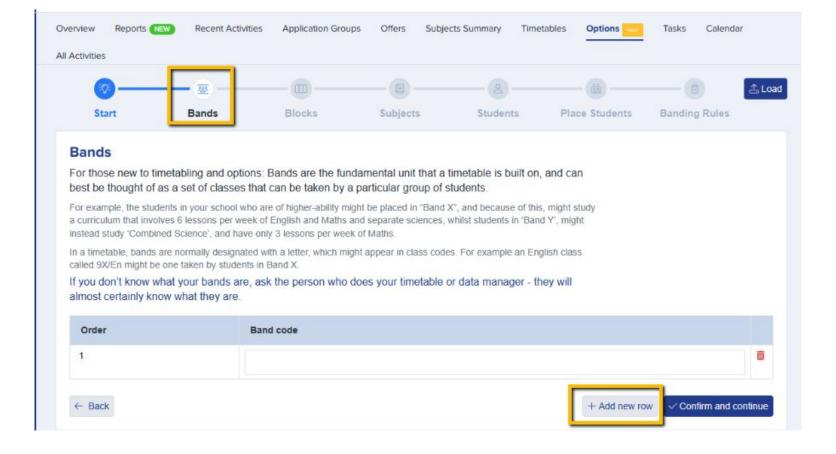
The Options module is built on a breadcrumb model, to take you step by step through the process of building your option blocks and weighing the impact of adding, removing and moving options to different blocks.



Step 1 will prompt you to begin creating your model. In future when you load this feature, you will be able to "load saved models", to open a saved version of your options and continue to work on them, but on your first visit, choose "create new".

Name your new option block file - maybe "Year 9 V1" and click "create".

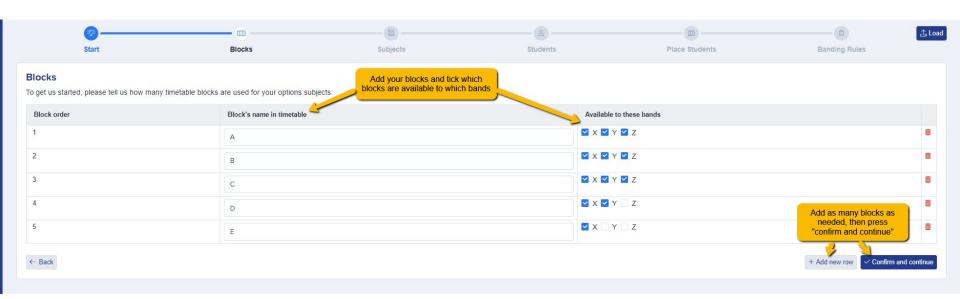




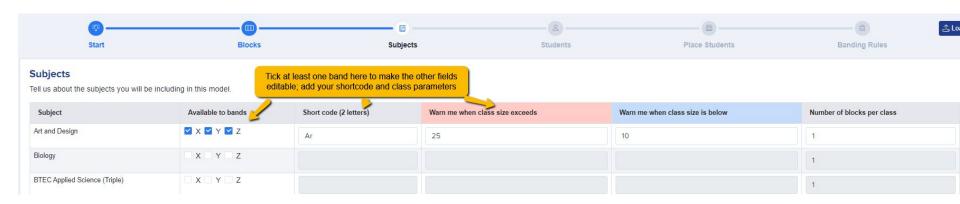
Add your **bands** information - you can use the "add new row" button to add as many bands as needed (and if you're not sure what these are, your timetabler will know).

Tell the wizard the names of your blocks, for example A, B, C, D, E - add a new row for each block.

Specify which blocks are available to each of your bands.



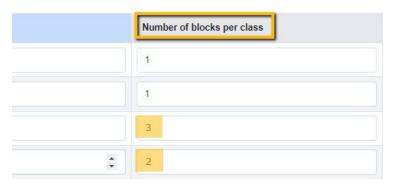
Next, the wizard will show the list of your subjects - it will need to know the **shortcodes** for these courses (for example, Art may be Ar, Business might be Bu, etc.) and each course will need a unique code. Check these with your timetabler if you are uncertain - it is ideal to use the same codes here as are used in your MIS.



Specify which subjects are available to which bands.

Apply the **thresholds** for your courses - the minimum and maximum numbers in order to safely and effectively run, and the number of blocks per class - you can set a different threshold for each course.

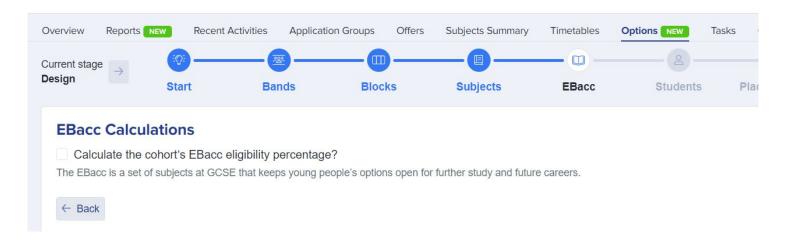
Number of blocks per class refers to the **width** of your courses. The number of blocks per class (sometimes known as the "width" of your class) refers to how many blocks the lessons for that class take up. While most subjects are taught inside a single block, some subjects require more lessons than can fit in a single block. Often, this might be courses which are doubles or triples.



Once your settings are in place, click "confirm and continue". It will check for any errors before allowing you to move on, for example if you have not used a unique code for each subject:



EBacc Calculations can also be activated and you can tell your system which subjects to include in your calculation.



To be eligible for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a student needs to study certain 'core' subjects. So we can calculate this accurately, please answer the following questions:

English Language

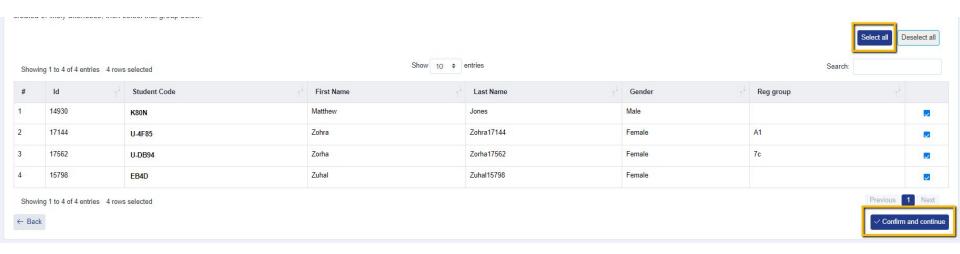
- All of our students study this, and this subject is not included in the options process.
- This is one of the options subjects we have listed in the previous step. It is the one we have called:



Move onto the **students step**, to decide which students you would like to apply the model to.

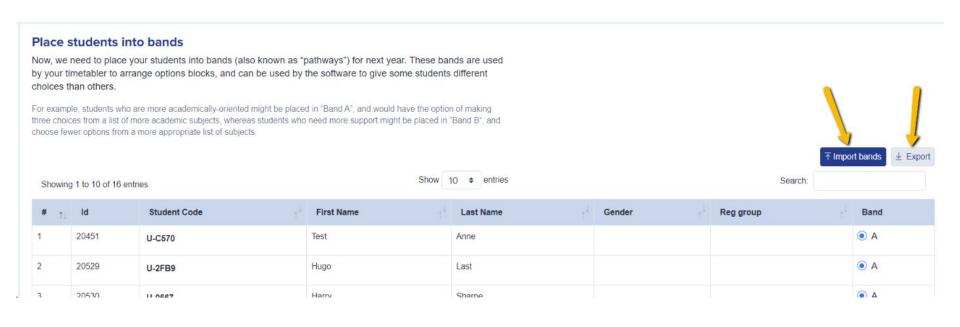
Do you know of any students who are leaving? You could deselect them here to discount them from your calculations.

"Select All" if you want to include every student from that year group in your model.



On the "Place Students" step, you need to specify which band each student will be allocated to, to ensure they see the correct options for their band or pathway.

You can complete this action more quickly by exporting a list of the students. You can then assign their bands in the CSV which is generated, and then click to import the data into the model.



On the "Banding Rules" step, you can set rules and parameters for the students in each band to ensure they see subjects they are eligible for, and choose subjects in the right combinations.



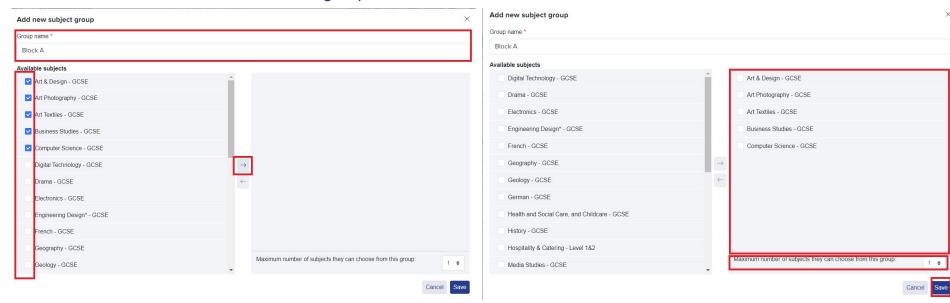
Display subjects as groups

(this will show the subject list to students as blocks)

+ Add new group

You can group subjects together, so they appear as blocks to the students, which can help them to clearly identify their choices.

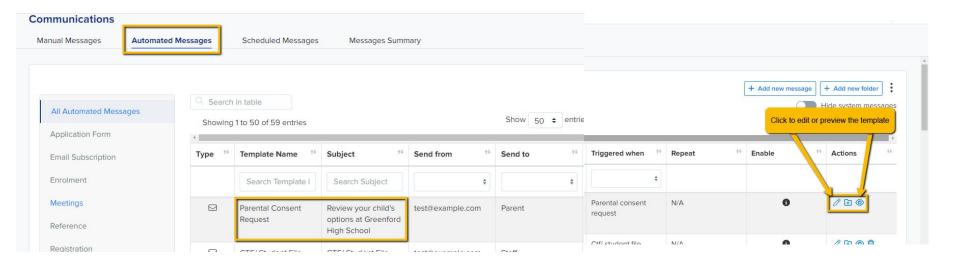
Create a 'Group name' for your subject group and add subjects by putting a tick on the subjects under the 'Available Subjects' column and then click Arrow Right. The subjects will now have moved to the right column and you can now indicate the number of subjects that the students are allowed to choose from this group then click 'Save'.



On the "Configure" step, you can select whether or not you require parents to confirm the choices made by the students.

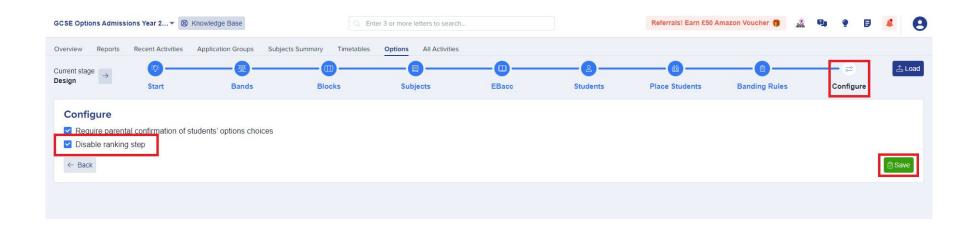


If you enable this, parents will be sent an email asking them to confirm the choices submitted by their child and the email can be configured via **communications and events > communications > automated messages**.



From here, you can also disable the ranking step.

By default, students are prompted to rank their choices in order of preference but this feature can be disabled if not needed as part of your process.



Once you have completed your **design** steps, you can click the arrow in the top left of your screen to put these settings into

effect and move to the **Choices Stage**.



Y9 Options Trial (IVE) 1/5 student has chosen...

Data Uploaded Files Imports csv Exports Review test Send Welcome Email (containing usernames and passwords) Preview Email // Edit Email Template Select all O Search *sample data* Show 10 + entries Showing 1 to 10 of 10 entries First Name Last Name **№ Email** ★ Temporary Password ₩ Welcome Email Student 1 Student 1 student.student VHs8s7in not sent N/A Student 10 Student 10 student_student_10 Erh5Fefq not sent Student 2 Student 2 student.student_2 pUk6VAzP not sent N/A Student 3 Student 3 student.student_3 9aGK-n34 not sent Student 4 Student 4 N/A student.student_4 7PBkk12o not sent

Current stage

Proceed to next stage

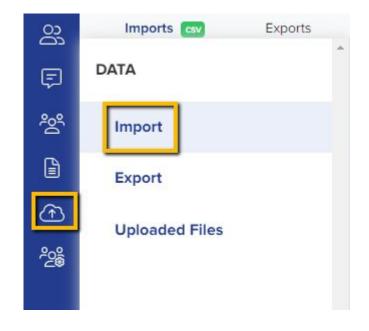
You are then ready to send the login details out to your students so they can access the system and submit their options choices.

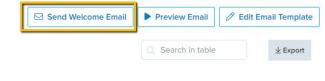
To send the welcome emails to your students, navigate to **Data** > Import.

Click on the report icon for the imported students, and then select them all using the checkbox.

Click "send welcome email" and this will send their login details to them so they can access your form.







Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries 2 rows selected





Show 10 \$ entries

CHOICES STAGE

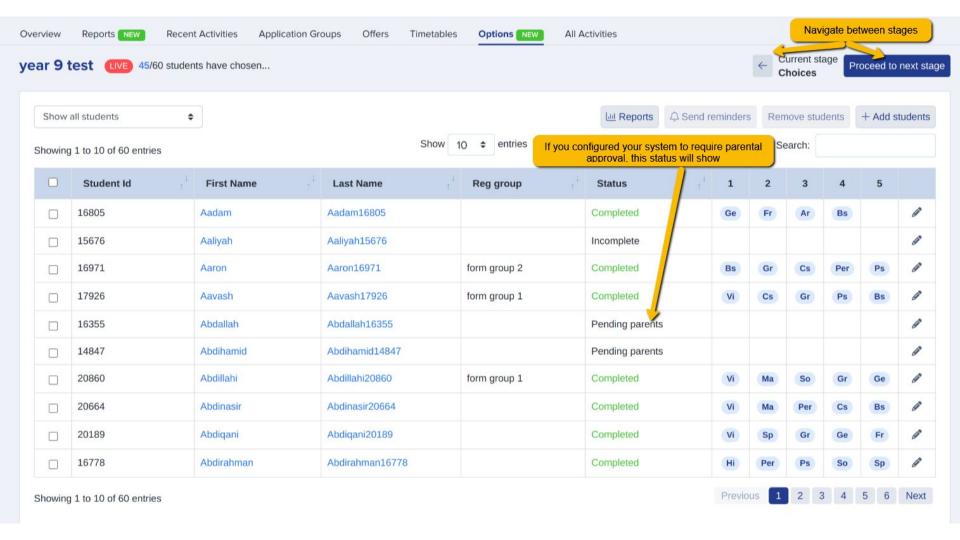
Students will log in and you will see their choices beginning to populate on an **overview** screen, as well as the **status** of those students:

"Never logged in" means that the student has not yet logged in to choose their options. This might be because they are having trouble with their login ID and Password, or simply that they have not tried to log in yet.

"Complete" means that the student has logged in, and chosen their options subjects. You can see their choices to the right of the status column.

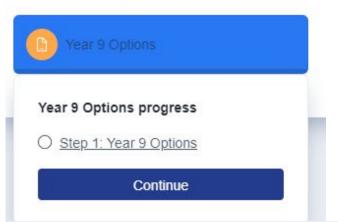
"Pending Parents" - if you have switched on the requirement for parents to agree with your students' options choices, this status will appear. The student has chosen their options, but the parents have yet to click the 'agree' button that was emailed to them listing the students' choices.

"Bounced" means that the email invitation that was sent to the student was returned to the school as 'undeliverable'. You should confirm the correct email with the student and then you can correct it by clicking in the 'bounced' field, where you can enter a corrected email address. An invitation will then be automatically re-sent to the student.



Year 9 Admissions Year 2023/2024





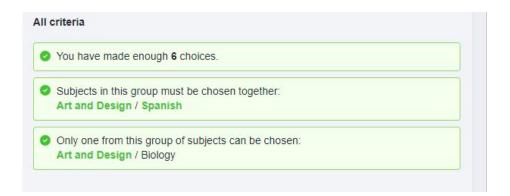
Students will log in and will click to update their options step.

They will then see a list of available subjects and once they have begun to select them, any rules they need to follow will appear.

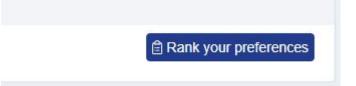
When they fulfil a criterion, this will appear with a green tick - they can't submit until all criteria have been ticked.

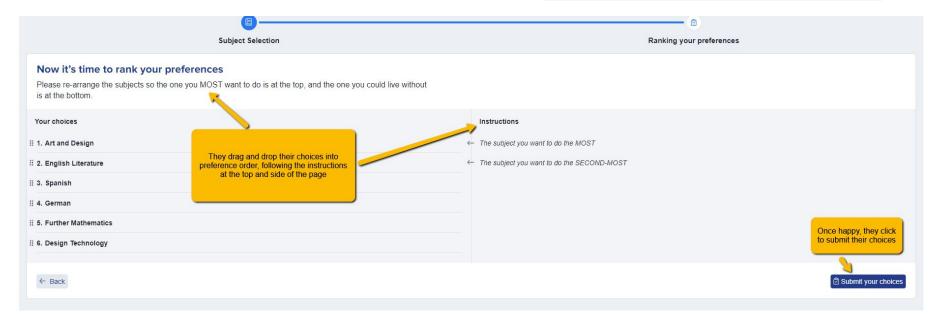
Select your preferred subjects

Click on the subjects you would like to choose from the list below, you wi Any rules you need to follow when choosing are shown on the right.	Il rank them in order in the next step.	
Available subjects	Your choices	All criteria
✓ Art and Design	1. Art and Design	You have made 1 choice. You'll need to select 5 more subjects. Subjects in this group must be chosen together: Art and Design / Spanish
Biology		
Business Studies		
Chemistry		
Computer Science		Only one from this group of subjects can be chosen:
Design Technology		Art and Design / Biology
Economics		
English Literature		
French		
Further Mathematics		



Once all criteria are met, they can then rank their preferences (if part of your process).





If enabled in the design stage, the student will then see the preview of the email which will be sent to their parent/guardian for approval of their choices:

Submitting your choices.

We will now send an email to your parents to notify them of the choices you have made. Below is an example of what it will look like:

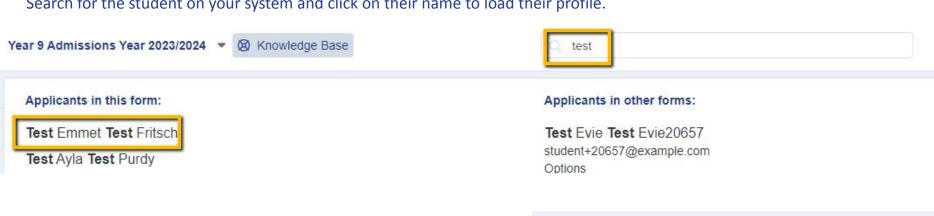
Dear parent,

Your child, Student 1 A1 has sent us their options subject choices for The Wells Free School, and we are writing to get your confirmation that you are happy with these choices.

In ranked order (starting with their top priority choice), they have chosen:

If needed, you can **enter a student's choices on their behalf.** Perhaps if they have no internet access, or are struggling to complete the form and need your support, you may need to use this feature.

Search for the student on your system and click on their name to load their profile.

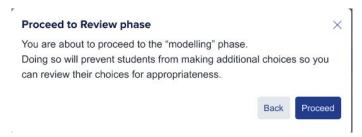


On their profile, you can **impersonate** them, enabling you to complete the form for them.



REVIEW STAGE

At the Review Stage, students are prevented from making any further changes to their own options. This enables you to ensure no amendments are made, so you and your team can review the choices selected to ensure they are appropriate.



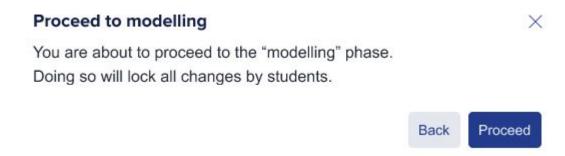
Staff can make changes to the students' options choices by clicking on their name and changing the choices as appropriate.



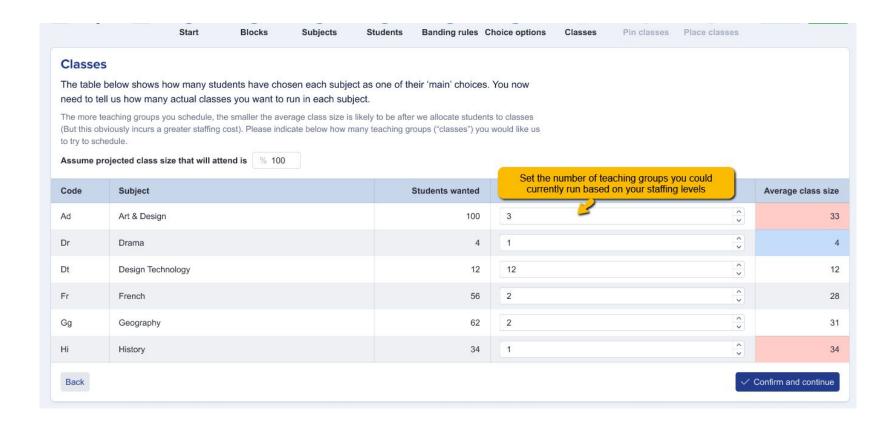
MODELLING STAGE

The Modelling Stage is where you will build your "best fit" model timetable, based on students' choices and any changes made at the Review Stage.

Students' options are locked at this stage, to avoid any changes being made and impacting the progress of the model.



On the Classes screen you can see how many students have chosen each subject, set the number of classes you can run for each subject based on your current staffing levels, and see the average class sizes.



The more students you have, the longer the wizard will take to generate your Option Blocks - it has to read all of the choices data and work out the best fit.



The **emoticons** will show you how happy the students are going to be, based on their choices versus what is available to them.

Students who have been allocated to their main choices will show as excited.

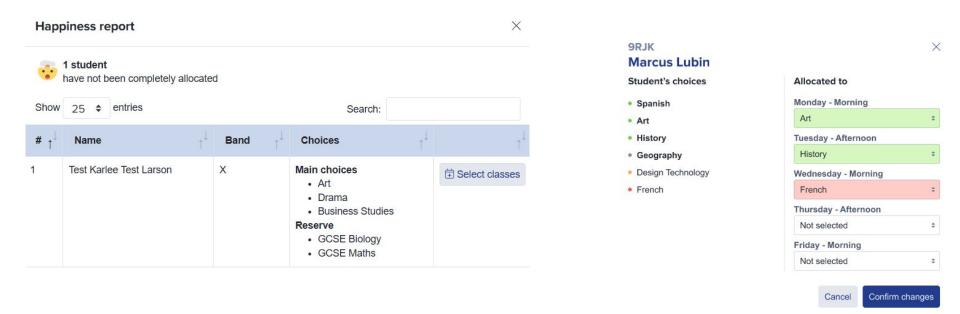
The next face shows students who are **happy** - they got most of their top choices.

The **sad** face shows students who are allocated to none of their main subjects, only reserves.

The **devastated** face indicates students have not been allocated at all, based on the current model being projected.



Click on a face to view the students who are within each status.



You could view the "devastated" group to see what else is available to them and you can allocate them to an alternative course using the "select classes" button.

You will see the **total** % **of successfully allocated students**, based on their first choices, and the EBacc eligibility (if you enabled it in your initial setup).

EBacc eligible: 0.0% • Happiness score: 97.68%

On each block, you have the function to manually add extra classes.

You can also click on each class to view who is allocated to it, and which other subjects they are also allocated to.

4 ≡ 94/Bio • 6 • 1 ≡ 94/Lit • 3 ≡ 94/Mat + Add new class

You can **pin any classes you are happy with**, so their position is retained when making other changes. Hover over a class to **pin**, **duplicate** or **remove** a class.

If you duplicate a class, it will create a copy of it underneath, and will automatically divide the number of students between the two groups.

Click the smart allocation button (magic wand) to test the subject in other blocks and see how it would impact the happiness rating.



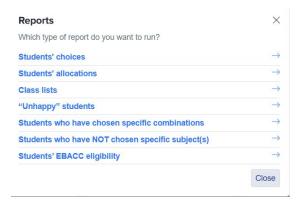
You can **Freeze** and **Unfreeze** your model; this allows you to lock/unlock classes and students in place

Click **Allocate** to recalculate class allocations for the students - you can do this individually, just for those who are unfrozen, or for all.



You can **make copies** of the model, so you can play around but keep the master copy undisturbed.

Click **Reports** to generate tables showing various data outputs (these can also be exported to CSV as needed).



FINALISE STAGE

Once you have completed your modelling, proceed to the **Finalise Stage**.

Students will be enrolled into their classes in your A+ system, and you can then prepare to transfer those allocations to your MIS.

You will need to have **created the classes within your MIS** prior to being able to export class allocations for your students.

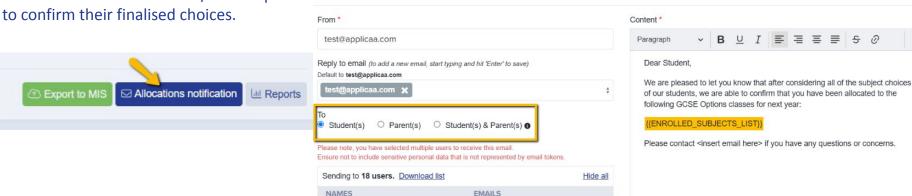
Proceed to Finalise stage

You are about to proceed to the "Finalise" stage. If you continue, this will lock your subjects' placement in your options

blocks. This will then allow you to send your students' subject allocations home via our email system.



You can opt to send an **Allocations Notification** to students and/or their parents



IMPORTING CLASSES TO YOUR MIS

If you are a SIMS user, log into the Admissions+ SIMS App and select the "Import Classes" option.

If you are a cloud-based MIS user, go to **Data > Export > Start an export** and select the "student classes" option, or you can click the **Export to MIS** button within the **Finalise Stage** of your model.



This **Guide** covers the steps in detail for each MIS.

