# **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.

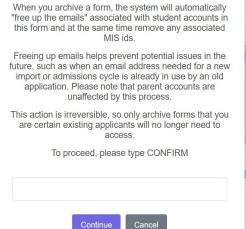
# Housekeeping

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)...

Please archive any old forms in your A+ system. This frees up their unique identifiers to eliminate any issues with adding the same student to your Options form, having already had a profile elsewhere in your system.







Once you have completed the archiving process, you will then be able to proceed with importing the students into A+ from your MIS, so they will be able to log in and complete your Options form.

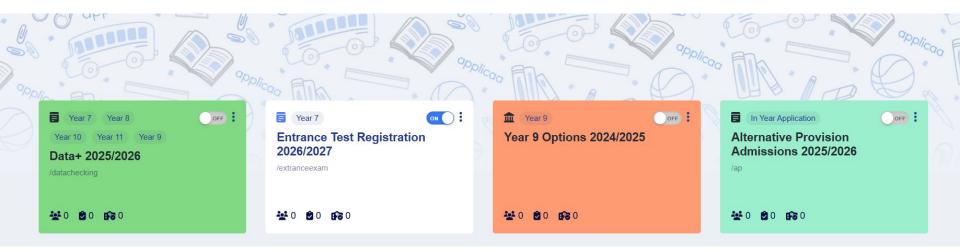
# How to see your new form

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





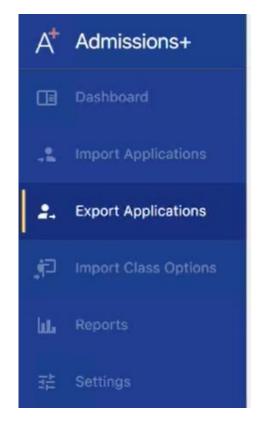
# Your forms area will appear and will look something like this:



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

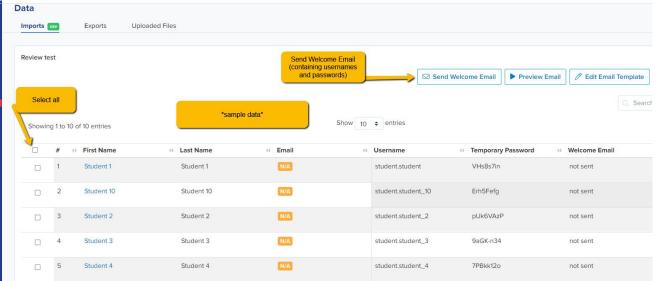
Exports

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.



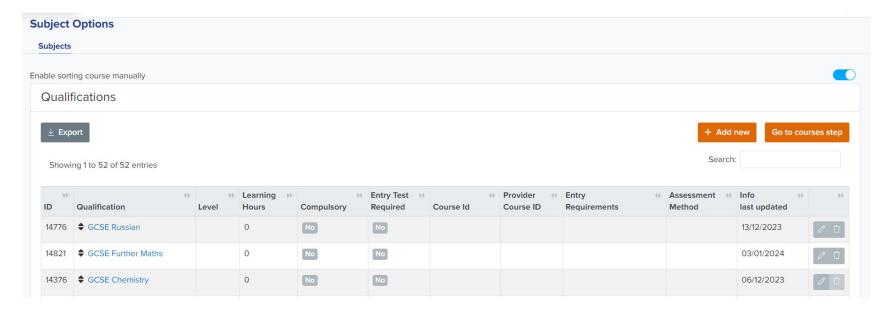


You should also check your **subject list**, to ensure the correct subjects are available to use within your options model.

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

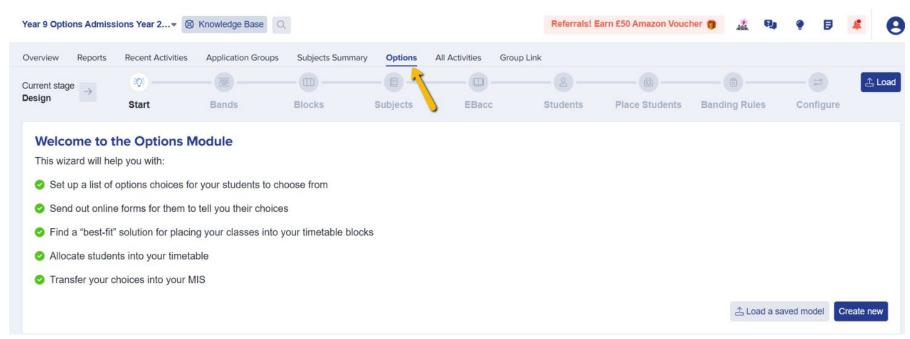
If this is your first cycle, you will need to add your subjects into your form and will have been prompted to do so as part of your onboarding tasks.

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.

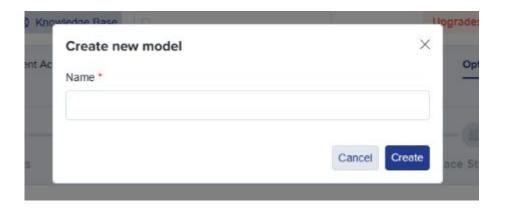


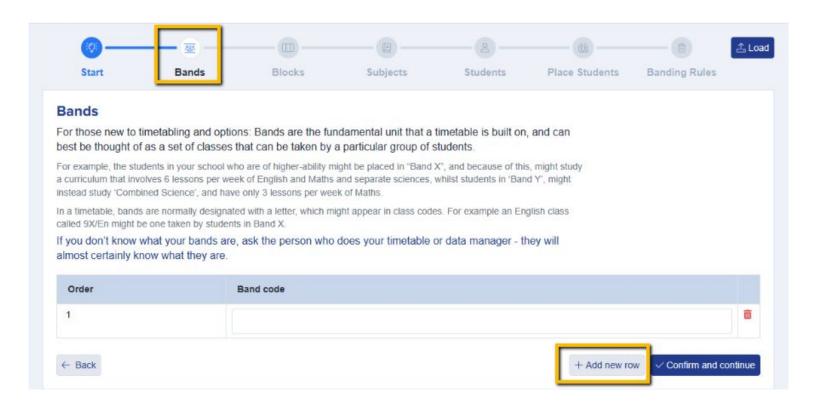
The Options module is built on a breadcrumb model, to take you step by step through the process of building your option blocks and weighing the impact of adding, removing and moving options to different blocks.



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".



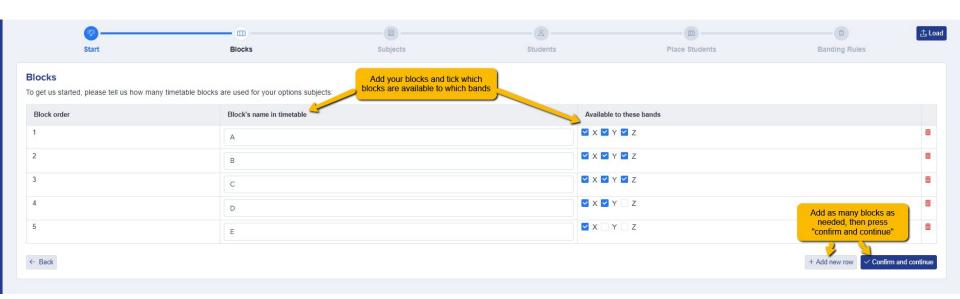


Add your **bands** information - you can use the "add new row" button to add as many bands as needed (and if you're not sure what these are, your timetabler will know).

If you don't have multiple bands, just add one - you can then assign all students to the same band.

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.

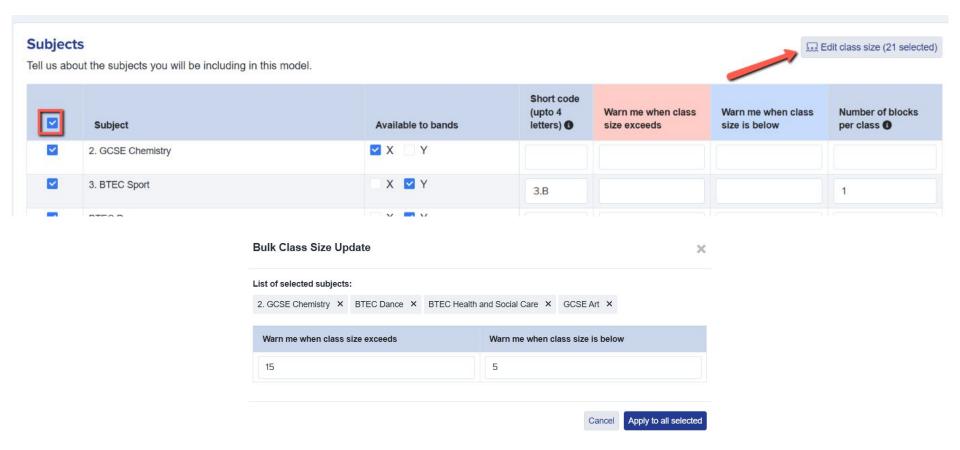


Next, the wizard will show the list of your subjects - it will need to know the **shortcodes** for these courses (for example, Art may be Ar, Business might be Bu, etc.) and each course will need a unique code. Check these with your timetabler if you are uncertain - it is ideal to use the same codes 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 and you can apply these values in bulk by selecting multiple subjects, and choosing the **Edit class size** option.



Number of blocks per class refers to the **width** of your courses. This means how much weight the course has; is it a single GCSE or equivalent? If so, add the number 1. If the course is a double, add the number 2, or 3 for a triple.

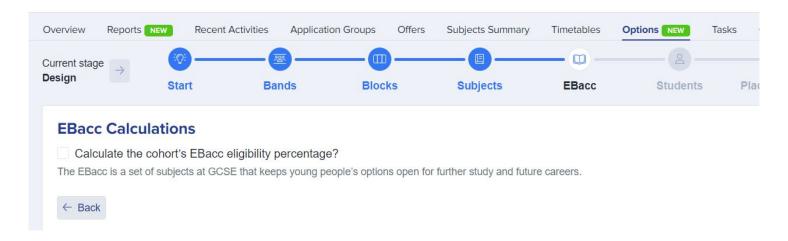
It refers to how many blocks the lessons for that class take up. While most subjects are taught inside a single block, some subjects require more lessons than can fit in a single block.

Number of blocks per class
1
1
3
\$ 2

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.

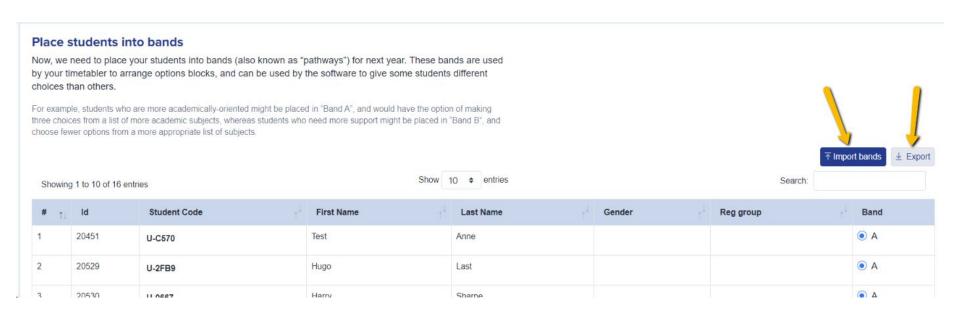
Do you know of any students who are leaving? You could deselect them here to discount them from your calculations.

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

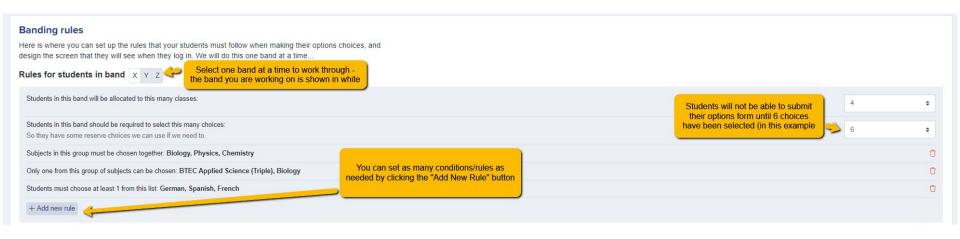


On the "Place Students" step, you need to specify which band each student will be allocated to, to ensure they see the correct options for their band or pathway.

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.



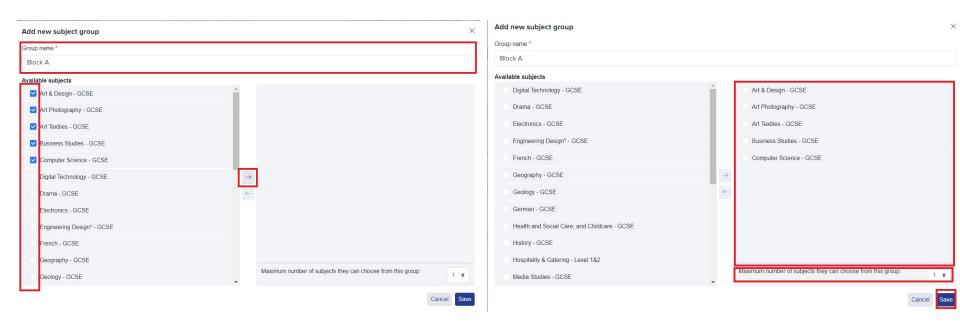
# Display subjects as groups

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

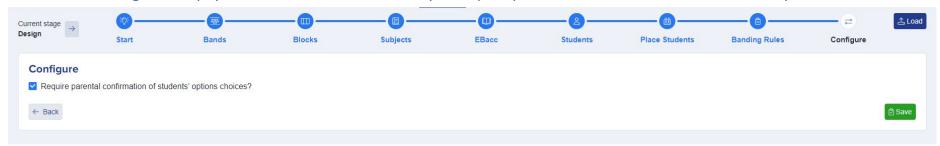
+ Add new group

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

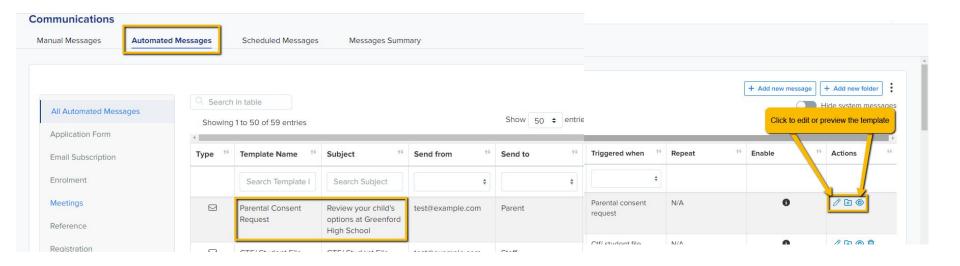
Create a 'Group name' for your subject group and add subjects by putting a tick on the subjects under the 'Available Subjects' column and then click Arrow Right. The subjects will now have moved to the right column and you can now indicate the number of subjects that the students are allowed to choose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

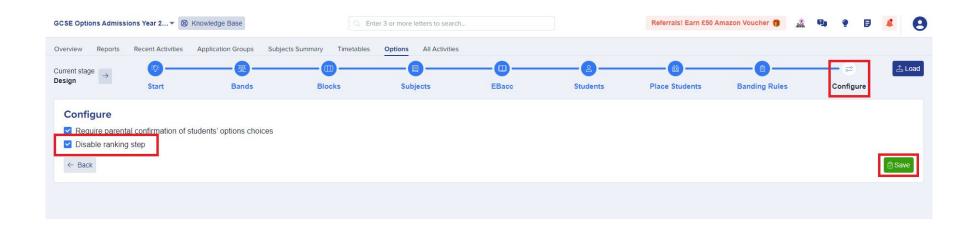


If you enable this, parents will be sent an email asking them to confirm the choices submitted by their child and the email can be configured via **communications and events > communications > automated messages**.

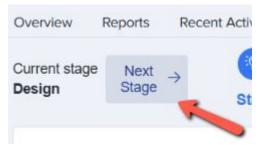


From here, you can also disable the ranking step.

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 and saved them, you can click the arrow in the top left of your screen to put these settings into effect and move to the **Choices Stage**.



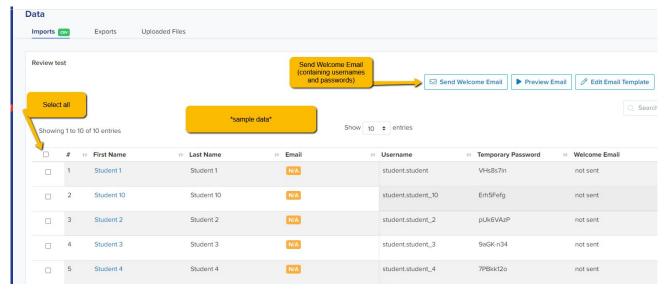
### Proceed to Choices stage

You are about to proceed to the "Choices" stage. Doing so will allow students to select their choices.





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

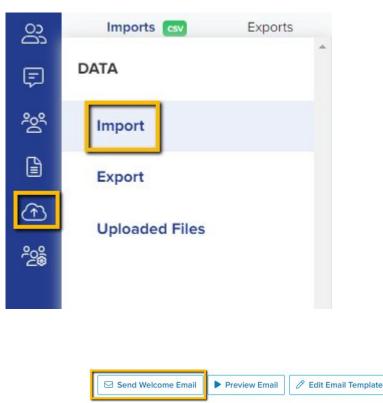


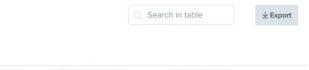
To send the welcome emails to your students, navigate to **Data > Import.** 

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



→ First Name

Name
Name

₩ Email

₦ Username

Show 10 \$ entries

Temporary Password
 Temporary Pas

₩ Welcome Email

N Last Signed In

# **CHOICES STAGE**

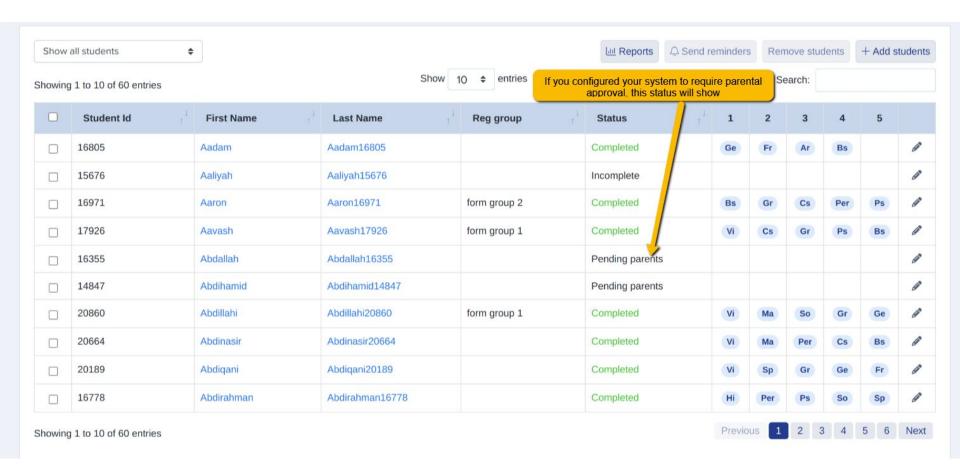
Students will log in and you will see their choices beginning to populate on an **overview** screen, as well as the **status** of those students:

"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.

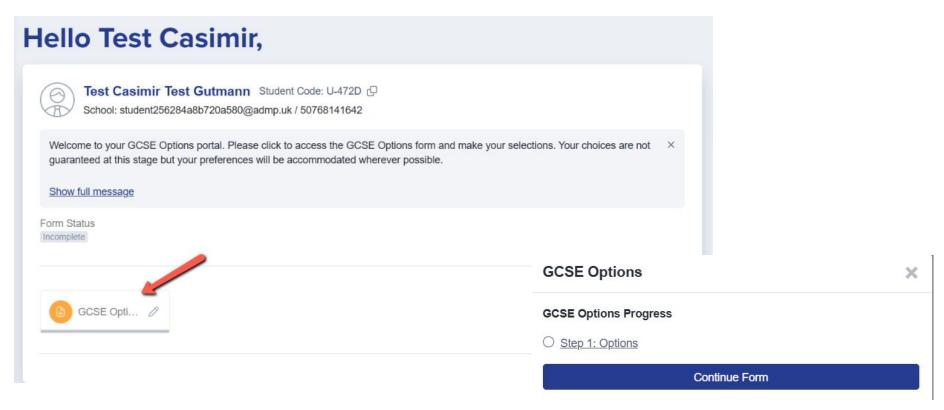
"Pending Parents" - if you have switched on the requirement for parents to agree with your students' options choices, this status will appear. The student has chosen their options, but the parents have yet to click the 'agree' button that was emailed to them listing the students' choices.

"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.



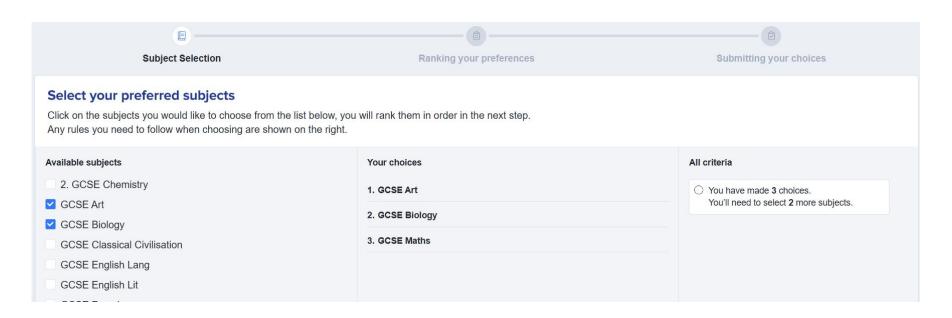
# **The Student View**

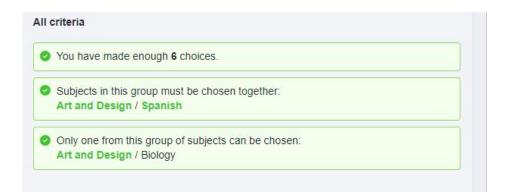
Students will log in and will click to update their options step.



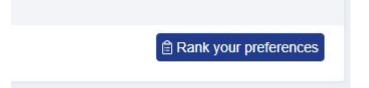
They will then see a list of available subjects and once they have begun to select them, any rules they need to follow will appear.

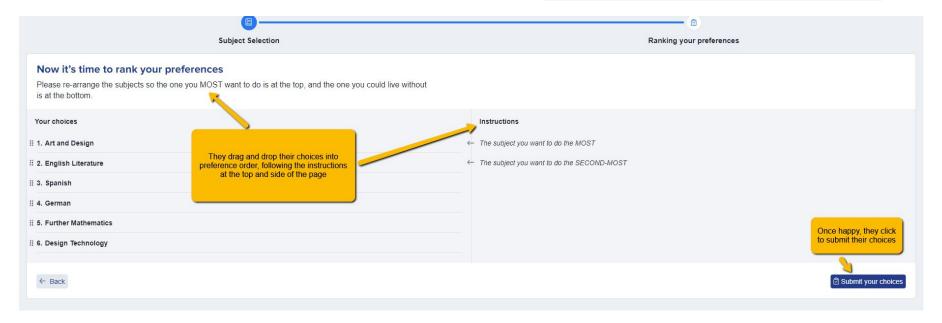
When they fulfil a criterion, this will appear with a green tick - they can't submit until all criteria have been ticked.





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.

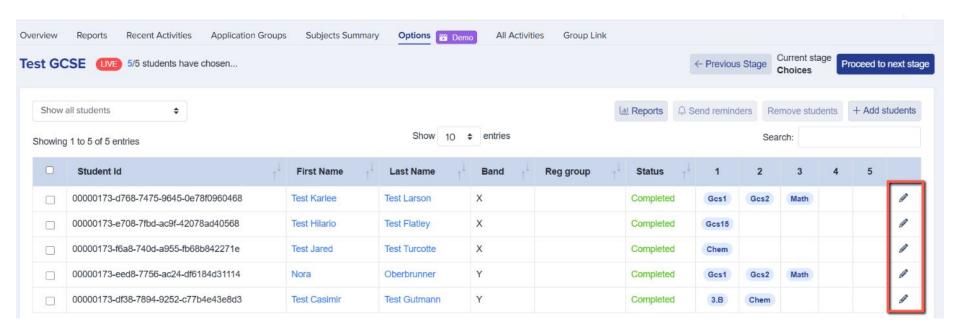
Search for the student on your system and click on their name to load their profile.



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



Alternatively, you can update or add their choices directly on your Options overview screen using the pencil icons.



# **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 again make changes to the students' options choices by clicking the pencil icons.



# **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.



Proceed to modelling

You are about to proceed to the "modelling" phase.

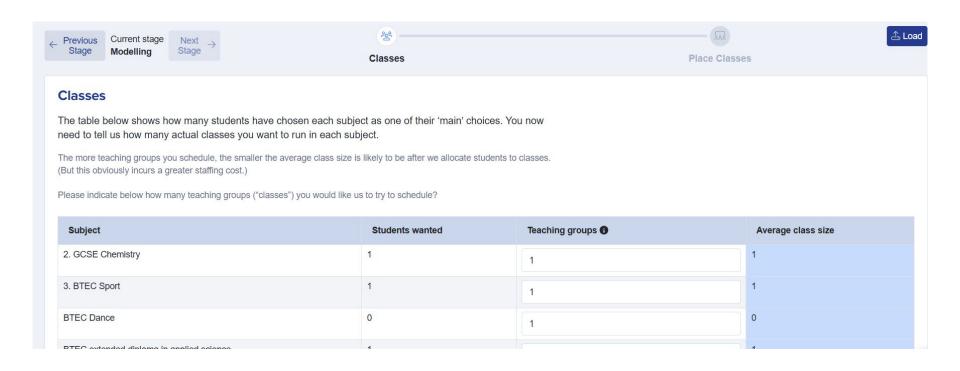
Doing so will lock all changes by students.

Back

Proceed

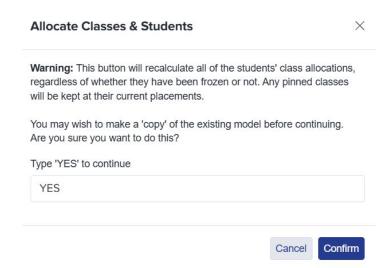
X

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.

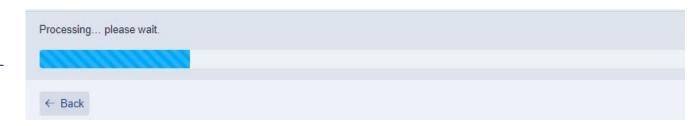


## Click **Allocate > Allocate Classes and Students** to display your model.





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.



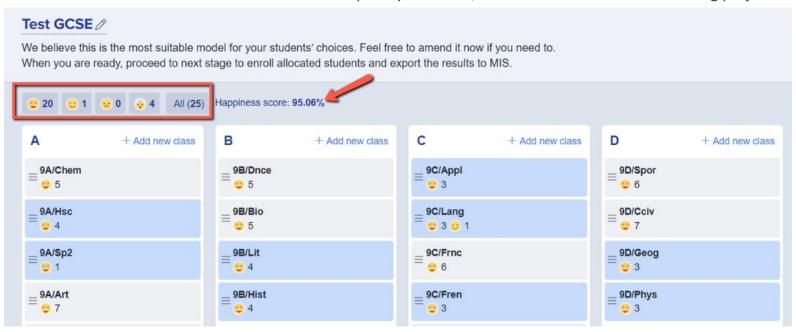
The **emoticons** will show you how happy the students are going to be, based on their choices versus what is available to them.

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.

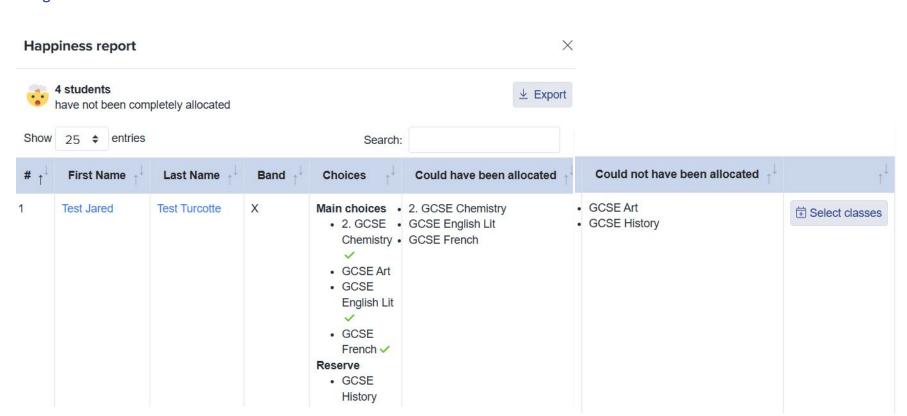
The **sad** face shows students who are allocated to subjects not in their original choices.

The **devastated** face indicates students have not been completely allocated, 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.

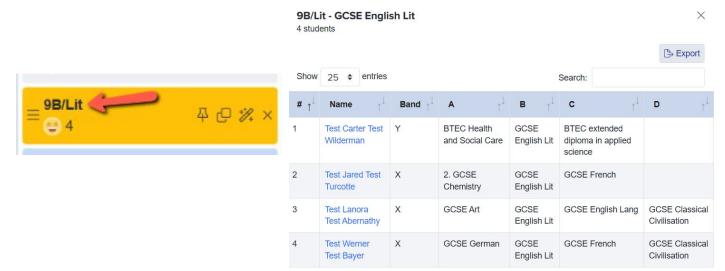


You will see the **total** % **of successfully allocated students**, based on their first choices, and the EBacc eligibility (if you enabled it in your initial setup).

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.







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, or use the **smart allocation** feature.

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.

Use the **Smart Allocation** feature to test a subject out in different blocks, and see what that does to the percentage of students allocated - this lets you test things out before you move them!





Test in other blocks



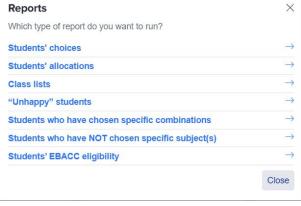
Click **Allocate** to recalculate class allocations for the students - you can do this individually, just for those who are unfrozen, or for all.

Use **Duplicate** to **make copies** of the model, so you can play around in your clones, but keep the master copy undisturbed.



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

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



# **FINALISE STAGE**

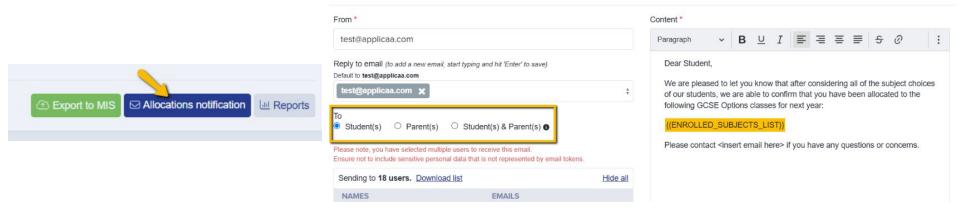
Once you have completed your modelling, proceed to the **Finalise Stage**.





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

You can opt to send an **Allocations Notification** to students and/or their parents to confirm their finalised choices.



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

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.

