

Timetabler's tips for elective line generation

With many schools about to start generating elective lines for 2019, some tips may be helpful.

The elective line generation process is a critical phase in preparing a timetable. Get it right and you have laid a strong foundation for a great outcome. Get it wrong and there are sure to be headaches along the way not to mention your Christmas holidays may be at risk!

Plan

The old saying, 'Fail to plan, plan to fail' could not be more true. Before you even launch your online subject selection forms, you should be thinking about the end solution. Consider the size of your cohort, the resources available at your school and the number of subjects you may be offering. You should also think about how your lines will fit against lines in other years and what relationships should exist within the set of lines that you are about to generate. For example, should you run two Ancient History classes in the same line to make collapsing one of those classes easier later on? Or should you perhaps schedule Biology and Investigating Science together in



case students who opted to study Biology find it too difficult?

Structure

As a standard, schools should be generating lines with multiple year data sets. If you have a structure that depends on staged based curriculum delivery then this is obviously essential. When generating lines in Year 11, you should be layering Years 12, 10 and 9 into the solution so you can discover potential show stoppers.

Consider

When placing classes into your line solution, pay careful consideration to your teaching and rooming resources. Think

about part-time teachers and aligning them into complementary lines to enable better spreads in the timetable. This is a common mistake made by schools and consequences include moving lessons before or after school, poor spreads or split classes – none of which are desirable.

Test

When you think you have a solution, test it out before signing off. It doesn't take a lot of time to produce a draft timetable if all the proper planning, structure and considerations have been taken into account. Refining this process will also make the task of testing your lines much more efficient. It's highly likely that you'll find an unforeseen issue in your solution, but don't be disheartened. Remember that this is the perfect time to find them because you are in a position to resolve them in the lines.

Follow this outline when generating your lines to be in the best position for success when the time comes to finish your timetable.

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