



Data Management Services

THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

Nova-T6 Functionality

Document Reference DMS070

Published/Updated October 2018



Fully accredited by Capita SIMS for proven quality of SIMS support

Contact us via the ICT Service Desk at:

-  01438 844777
 -  help@sd.hertsforlearning.co.uk
 -  <https://support.hertsforlearning.co.uk>
-

Herts for Learning
01438 845111
hertsforlearning.co.uk



© Herts for Learning 2018

Copyright of this publication and copyright of individual documents and media within this publication remains with the original publishers and is intended only for use in educational settings, schools and academies.

All rights reserved. Extracts of the materials contained in this publication may be used and reproduced for educational purposes only. Any other use requires the permission of the relevant copyright holder.

Requests for permissions, with a statement of the purpose and extent, should be addressed to:
help@sd.hertsforlearning.co.uk

Herts for Learning Ltd.
Registered in England and Wales No. 8419581
Registered office: Robertson House, Six Hills Way,
Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2FQ
www.hertsforlearning.co.uk

CONTENTS

SATELLITE INSTALL	1
Accessing Nova-T6	1
MENU ROUTES	2
PROCESSES	3
EXPORTING THE TIMETABLE TO SIMS (SQL)	5
ONE PER DAY RULE	7
USEFUL ROUTES AND FUNCTIONS	8
Other General Faults.....	9
Other Information	9

Satellite Install

Documentation can be found in the DMS SOLUS3 Common Tasks document here:

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/upgrades/>

Accessing Nova-T6

SIMS | Focus | Nova-T6. If this gives the error “**Unable to write to sims.ini**” then the user has not been given high enough permissions on their computer. This is not a SIMS permissions issue, but one that the Network Manager of the school needs to resolve. Nova-T6 requires the user to have Read and Write access to the file SIMS.ini located in the C:\Windows folder (**C:\Windows\ SIMS.ini.**) Once you have access to **Nova-T6** you will get a **Nova-T6 Initial Data** screen that has three options.

1. Load Recent File.

This shows the most recent file opened on the computer you are using regardless of the user. The drop down arrow allows the user to pick one of the most recent 8 files accessed on that computer. If you select a file then the path for that file is displayed underneath. If the file was on a memory stick or external hard drive that is not attached then you will not be able to load it. If you log on to another computer your most recent files in the list will be the most recent files loaded from Nova-T6 on that machine. To **Load** a file select it then click **OK**.

2. Load Other File.

To be used if you are not loading a recent file. Select this and then click OK. You will be taken to a Load Dataset window that has 4 options.

a. Load Local Dataset.

If this is selected then only Datasets that have been saved in the internal folder structure of Nova-T6 will be available to be loaded. E.g. S:\SIMS\SNOVA\NT6\2015.

b. Load External Dataset.

If this option is selected then you can select a Dataset from any drive attached to the computer.

c. Create Maintenance Dataset.

DO NOT SELECT THIS OPTION.

d. Create Construction Dataset.

Select this option if you need to recover Nova-T6 data from SIMS.

3. Start without loading data

DO NOT SELECT THIS OPTION.

Menu Routes

Process

This menu allows the Timetabler to choose which Process to use; there are also buttons for these. When you select a Process the second Menu option reflects the process you have selected:

Cycle, Model, Classes, Sessions, NCC, Analysis, Block, Bands, Auto or Optimize.

This allows the Timetabler to use functions associated with the particular Process they have chosen.

Data

This menu allows the Timetabler access to various functions dealing with a Dataset. It includes **Load Dataset** and **Select a Dataset**, **Transfer Curriculum** to start a new timetable, **Import** and **Export** functions and various **Partnership Xchange** functions. You can also open **recent files** from a list at the bottom of this menu.

Plan

This menu allows the Timetabler to set up or edit the basedata for the timetable. These include **Subjects, Teachers, Teacher Departments, Rooms, Teacher Rooms, Subject Rooms**, and **Facilities**.

Tools

This menu has all the functions that are not elsewhere. Some useful items are **Allocate Rooms, Assign Levels, Ordering, Combing Chart, Clash Table** and **Define Period Times**.

Reports

This menu allows the Timetabler access to a number of useful reports on the timetable data.

Timetable

This menu allows the Timetabler to view a selection of timetables, and batch print a selection of timetables.

Help

This menu allows the Timetabler access to see which version of Nova-T6 they are using or to access Nova-T6 Help.

Processes

On each Process screen the Timetabler can press the **F1** key to get up a small Help window. If you want more help then pressing the **Help** button will open the Nova-T6 Help to the appropriate place.

Cycle

This is where the Timetabler sets up the shape of the timetable. **Teaching Periods** are indicated in Blue, **Non-Teaching Periods** in Black. Lessons must not be scheduled in Non-Teaching Periods, only Non Class Codes. If a register (not AM or PM) is required for a period in **Lesson Monitor** then it must be scheduled as a lesson in a teaching period. **Non-Teaching Periods** can be used for Registration, Break, Lunch, and Twilight and can be used for duties and Exam Invigilation. If you want AM or PM registration registers available to a cover teacher from their **Home Page** in **SIMS** then you need to set registration up as lessons in **Teaching Periods**.

Model

This is where the Timetabler sets up the Curriculum Model, with structures indicating how classes are linked to each other. You can manually enter the number of students for a year, a band or a class. You can also use the function **Data | Retrieve Membership Totals** to import actual student numbers from SIMS.

Classes

This is where the Timetabler allocates resources to classes. Resources are **Teachers**, **Rooms** and **Facilities**. **Facilities** are other resources that the Timetabler wants to take into consideration when constructing the timetable, for example there may only be 3 ICT rooms.

Sessions

This is where the Timetabler can adjust whether classes are scheduled as Single, Double or other multiple length lessons. It is also where you can view and edit the resources allocated to a particular session of a class.

NCC

This is where the Timetabler creates and schedules Non Class Codes. There is also a panel for helping to schedule PPA time.

Analysis

This is where the Timetabler can investigate if they have enough teaching staff for the Curriculum Model, Average Class sizes and other less useful information.

Block

This is where the Timetabler can Manually or Automatically **Build** (or **Unbuild**) an individual Block, **Schedule** (or **Unschedule**) an individual Block or Edit the staffing of a class. When a Block is Scheduled a useful tool, especially for a linear group, is **Group Mode** which can be accessed by **Block | Group Mode** or **F8**.

Band

This is where the Timetabler can Manually **Schedule** or **Unschedule** Blocks. There is also a useful **Show Fits** button function to assist with scheduling blocks.

Auto

This is where the Timetabler can Automatically **Build, Unbuild, Schedule, or Unschedule** a selection of Blocks. You can also adjust the **One-Per-Day Rule** for a block and set the rules for when a lesson can occur. If you want to run **Tools | Partial Schedule Trials** then you must be in the **Auto** window. The **Auto** menu route also allows you to **Lock** and **Unlock** a selection of Blocks.

Optimize

This is where the Timetabler can investigate and try to adjust the spread of lessons for a block.

Exporting the Timetable to SIMS (SQL)

Date Range

If you double click on the date range in the top right hand corner of the screen you can set the date range for the next export of the timetable. We advise that the initial send of the data to SIMS is from 1st September to 31st July (01/09 – 31/07).

Data | Export Curriculum and Timetable to SQL...

When this is selected the program analyses some of the data and can reject the operation. Sometimes it allows the user to select Login and select a date range for the send before it decides that there is a problem. Sometimes it allows the user to go through the whole process of exporting the timetable before indicating that there is a problem.


Duplicate Names

This problem will occur at the beginning of the process, it is generally only a problem when exporting the timetable for the first time, but can occur if the Timetabler has added classes during the year. You need to run **Report | Duplicate Curriculum Names** to find out the problems. Until this report advises there are no duplicates the timetable cannot be exported.

Levels

This problem will occur at the beginning of the process. It is generally only a problem when exporting the timetable for the first time, but can occur if the Timetabler has added classes during the year. The user needs to go to **Tools | Assign Levels** and ensure that all classes have a Level before the timetable can be exported. Timetablers should ensure that each class has an appropriate level in order that Assessment, Exams Organiser, Profiles and Course Manager can function correctly.

SQL Link Path

This problem will occur at the beginning of the process but will be very rare. If it occurs then the user needs to go to **Tools | Set SQL Link** path and use the  button to find the **SIMS .net** folder on their computer.

One or more critical errors have been detected!

This message appears after you have logged in and selected dates for the export. There are various causes, clicking the **Help** button will direct you to a possible solution. Until the problem is resolved the timetable cannot be exported.

If the message refers to classes then it is probably necessary to run **Database Diagnostics** in **SIMS** and this may resolve the problem.

If the message refers to the Date range then you have selected an invalid date range that either overlaps 2 academic years or 2 timetable cycles. To resolve this issue you need to select appropriate dates.

If the message refers to **Cycle** shape or Lessons scheduled at **Non-Teaching** periods then you will need to ensure that the **Cycle** shape is the same in both **SIMS** and **Nova-T6**.

Unrecognised Teacher/Room Codes

You need to resolve these issues at some stage but it will not prevent the export of the timetable. You will get a reminder of the problem after the export has been completed along with any Rooms\Teachers that have not been recognised. To resolve this problem you need to use the route in **SIMS | Focus | Person | Manage Classroom Staff**, and ensure that the teacher has a record in this area with the correct staff code. If the problem is with a room then the route is **Focus | School | Rooms**, and you need to ensure the room exists with the correct code. Once you have resolved the problems you should export the timetable again.

Errors after Clicking Submit on the final screen of the Wizard

One problem that is rare is when the submission seems to be taking a long time, generally more than 3 minutes.

- One resolution to this problem is to remove a setting in **SIMS | Tools | Academic Management | Course Manager | Course Manager Settings**, and ensure that the box **Auto update Class Supervisors from chosen Course Supervisors** is not ticked.
- Another resolution is to check that all Years have a **NCYr** in the Model process in Nova-T6 (this problem may also cause a Windows fault).
- Another resolution is to check are that all **NCC** codes have a description in the **NCC** process.

One Per Day Rule

You can only set the **One per Day Rule** for a Block in the Auto process. All classes in a block must have the same **One per Day Rule**. It is important that the **One per Day Rule** is set correctly for each block. There are 4 levels;

1. Active
2. Clusters Only
3. Clusters by Staff
4. Suspended

1. Active

This is represented by a tick on the Auto window and the majority of blocks should be at this level. Often a block will be Active but with no symbol in the Auto window. This will be where the **One Per Day Rule** has to be broken to allow the block to schedule. An example of this is a Linear block with 17 periods but the timetable only has 5 days. In this case the block has to occur more than once on a day but it will be set so that no more than one lesson of a cluster can be scheduled on a day (**Clusters Only**.)

2. Clusters Only

This setting will allow two or more clusters (subjects) in a block to be scheduled on the same day but not 2 lessons of the same cluster (subject.) You may need to set this manually as in the example of a Humanities block with History 3 periods, Geography 3 periods and RE 2 periods in a 2-week timetable. Initially this will be set with an Active level because the number of periods for the block (8) is not greater than the number of days in the Cycle (10), Because it is OK to have History and Geography on the same day you need to set the One per Day Rule to Clusters Only.

3. Clusters by Staff

This setting should be used if you do not mind having two lessons of the same cluster on the same day as long as the teachers are different. For example you may have year 12 blocks where classes are taught by 2 teachers. If you need to schedule 2 periods on the same day but with different teachers then you need to set the block to Clusters by Staff.

4. Suspended

This should rarely be used as it allows you to schedule as many periods of a block on a day as you can with no restrictions. One time we advise using it is for Year 12 and 13 blocks that are part of a consortium structure. This setting then allows you flexibility of staffing for these blocks.

Useful Routes and Functions

Data | Get Data Summary...

This allows the user to see the dates of Academic years, when Exports of the timetable were made to SQL, who made them and their date range and also to see when Timetable Cycles were exported to SQL.

Data | Retrieve Membership Totals.

This allows the user to see the actual size of classes in the Model window.

Data | Export Curriculum and Timetable to SQL...

For submitting the timetable to SIMS. There is the option to only send Band information, but this is for setting up the Options process only and should generally not be ticked.

Data | Export to Nova-T4/Options...

This creates a file that can be imported into Options or Nova-T4.

Tools | Define Period Times

You can input the times of your school day here, useful as a check and also if you are going to change the school day as the times can be put in here before you go through the Export Timetable Cycle to SQL routine. The simple way to fill in the times is to manually type them in with a colon between hours and minutes. Once you have completed the times for Monday, clicking Copy will copy the times to all the other days of the week.

Data | Export Timetable Cycle to SQL...

This should only be used in case of need, if a new Timetable cycle is exported during the year then any Cover arrangements and Lesson marks after the start of the new cycle will be removed. Before using this route go to **Tools | Define Period Times** and enter the times for the new cycle. You get a message warning you about this when selecting this route, only continue if it is what you are intending to do. The Cycle should be given a name usually to do with when it will start, and also you will need to put in the Start date. When you click OK the new cycle will be exported to SIMS.

Tools | Assign Levels

All classes must have a level assigned to export the timetable. It is important for Assessment Manager, Exams, Course Manager and Profiles that the correct level is assigned to each class.

Tools | Ordering

Here the user can decide the order of Teachers and Subject. We advise you use Code for both.

Tools | Clash Table

Here you can see which blocks can be scheduled at the same time.

Tools | Combing Chart

A traditional combing chart.

Reports | Cluster/Session Mismatch

This report is useful to ensure that what is on the plan for staffing is the same as on the timetable so that all other reports run correctly. Any discrepancies need to be resolved.

Reports | Duplicate Curriculum Names

The timetable cannot be exported if Duplicate Curriculum Names exist. This report shows the problems.

Timetable | New | Classes without Rooms

A very useful report to check all lessons have a room to be taught in.

Teacher is replaced during the year

Go to **Plan | Teachers**, select the teacher, click **Edit** and replace their details with their replacement. Ensure the new teacher is set up correctly in **Manage Classroom Staff** in **SIMS** and then Export the Timetable.

Sessions

The Sessions process is an area that many Timetablers try to avoid, but if you have multiple period lessons on the timetable then you need to set them up in Sessions. This is better than using the **Suspended One Per Day Rule** setting or locking lessons in place

Locking

Locking is overused by some Timetablers. Locking should only be used when it is imperative that a lesson happens at that particular time. Some Timetablers lock the whole of year 11 when it is finished, this is unnecessary and reduces your chances of finding solutions to scheduling problems.

Other General Faults

Access Violation errors.

These occur intermittently in Nova-T6, sometimes because the user has clicked where the program thinks you should not have, but there are other issues. The best solution is to save your work, close Nova-T6 and reload the file. If you cannot close **Nova-T6** then use **Windows Task Manager** to end the process and load the most recent Backup of Nova-T6 that has been saved.

Teacher not getting information in SIMS.

This can occur sometimes even when no error messages are seen. One clue is that on the **Changes** screen of the export wizard, the classes of the teacher appear as having name changes. If you do an export of the timetable that appears successful, do the export again immediately and note if there are any **Changes** to class names. If there are then the teacher(s) concerned are not properly recorded in SIMS. You need to check **Manage Classroom Staff** and their **Employment** tab in **Person | Staff** (this requires Personnel Officer permissions.)

Other Information

Blue square on Bands screen. This is simply the selected cell, selected by clicking on it.

Year order incorrect on Model or Band screen. This can be corrected on the **Model** screen by selecting a year, holding down the Ctrl key and then using the up and down arrow keys to move the year.

Should Registration be a NCC or a lesson? Registration can be set up either as a NCC or as a lesson. If they are set up as NCCs then when a teacher is asked to cover a

register they are not able to select the Cover from their Homepage to take the register. If they are set up as lessons then the Timetabler would need to manually adjust the Load of each Registration Tutor. If the school has other tutor time that they want a register taken for then this needs to be put into the Model and scheduled just like any other lesson.

Main Class Teacher not correct. If a class has more than one teacher it is important that the correct one is labelled as the Main Class Teacher as this is the one that Assessment Manager picks up. This is set in the **Classes Process** in Nova-T6. When you have found the class and clicked on it so it has a green outline, Left click on the **Class name** (in bold) to bring up the **Edit Class Details** window. In the section **Main Teacher** you can select the correct teacher from the dropdown menu. When this has been done you will need to **Export Curriculum and Timetable to SQL** for the changes to take effect.

Printing or Copying from a Process screen. This causes some users a problem. They expect that when you click **Print** for a window to appear, but you have to select the area of the screen that you want to print first. To do this Left click the Print (or Copy) button and drag to the area of the screen you want to print. When the 'No access' symbol changes to a piece of paper with an arrow, you have found an area of the window you can print. Letting go of the Left button will bring up the Print window.

Lesson not on timetable. When some changes are made in Nova-T6 lessons can become unscheduled and are therefore not on the timetable. This can happen if the resources allocated to a class are changed on the Classes window. The block has then become Unbuilt, which means that the program knows where the block is scheduled but not how the sessions are organised within the block. One way to check this is to run **Report | Unbuilt Blocks**. These classes will also need to be roomed when put back onto the timetable.

Unroomed Classes. Sometimes classes can lose their room because of the way a change was made in the timetable. A useful Timetable to look at is **Timetables | New | Classes without rooms**. It is always worth making sure that every class has a room on the timetable so that when this timetable report is viewed you can easily see if there are any classes that need a room.

Clashes of Timetabled Rooms and Assistant Teachers. If this window appears then ensure that all the boxes in the **Remove** column are NOT ticked, otherwise all the listed items will be removed from the timetable.

Non Class Codes not appearing. In the NCC process, once a NCC has been set up for a member of staff then the **Assign** button must be selected. If it is not then it will be like scheduling an unbuilt block. To check this select the NCC process, select the appropriate NCC, select the block you are interested in and check the Yellow, Blue or Green cells on the right of the screen. If they are empty then the code has not been set up correctly, to resolve this click the **Assign** button.

Teacher on class incorrectly on Classes process. This will happen if a teacher was originally assigned to share a class with another teacher but then is not required. After the class has been selected, so it has a green outline, hold Ctrl and right click on the member of staff to remove them from the class.



Data Management Services
THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

Data Management Services Team © Herts for Learning Ltd, 2018

Postal Point SROB201, Robertson House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ

Herts for Learning

01438 844777

hertsforlearning.co.uk



Details for all HfL training courses can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2fY0fgL>