

## Syllabus Plus Users Information Update – May/June 2005 Edition 9

### Introduction

I've just realised that the year's not far off being half over already! Somehow it seems like it should still be March.

### Current Syllabus Plus Issues

It is pretty much a case of 'No news is good news' on the Syllabus Plus front. The system seems fairly stable at the moment, and we have no plans for any major upgrades in the near future.

Over the longer term, Scientia, the company that produces Syllabus Plus, is planning on making some significant changes to the way in which users interact with the timetabling database. At the moment, the only interface between the timetabling database and the user is via Syllabus Plus. As you would be well aware, the Syllabus Plus program can be quite cumbersome and unwieldy at times, especially if you are only looking to use it for a couple of specific tasks (such as room bookings).

Scientia have decided to address this issue by developing a suite of user friendly web based interfaces that will perform specific roles such as room bookings, timetable data collection and timetable adjustment. These programs would enable users not trained in Syllabus Plus to be able to easily interact with the timetabling database.

It remains to be seen exactly how these developments will progress however, and whether or not it will be worthwhile for the University to implement these programs. As the development of these programs by Scientia continues, we will no doubt be asking you as users for feedback on whether or not you believe the implementation of specific modules at the University might be worthwhile.

### Syllabus Plus Tip – Problems in Syllabus Plus

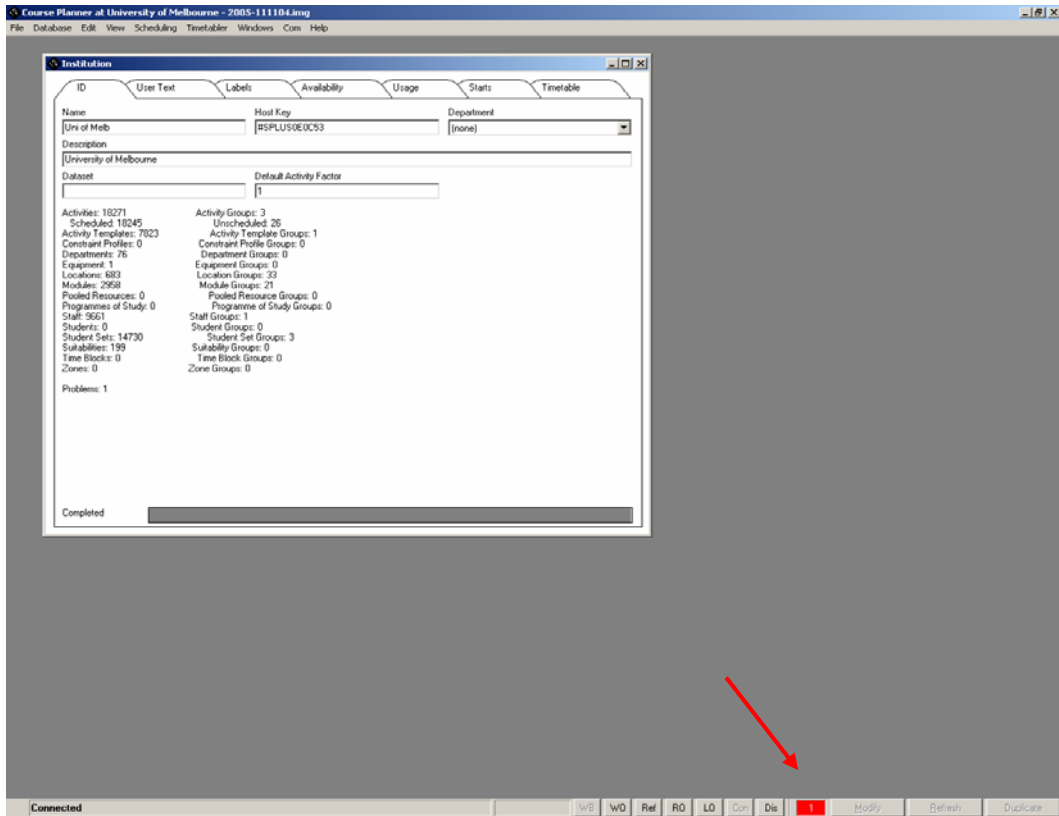


Figure 1: Syllabus Plus Problem

Sometimes (especially after changes are made to the time of an activity for some reason), Syllabus Plus creates an error. You will know that Syllabus Plus has an error by the fact that there is a 'Problems Count Indicator' (red box) at the base of the screen. (See Figure 1 above) The number inside this box indicates how many errors there are. If no problems are encountered then this problems indicator will remain uncoloured with a zero count. In order to view the 'Problems' screen, double click on the box when it is red (See Figure 2 below)

**Figure 2. Problems Box**

Constraint Type	Problem Count
Activity/Location Size	0
Avoid Deferred Resourcing Constraint	0
Avoid Double Booking Constraint	0
<b>Avoid Resource Mismatch Constraint</b>	<b>1</b>
Avoid Sequencing Constraint	0
Avoid concurrency	0
Free Block	0
Maximum Hours	0
Maximum Work Span	0
Maximum time per week	0
Non-Contact Time Constraint	0
Resource Break	0
Same Time Activities Constraint	0
Share with Department	0
Suggested Time Constraint	0
Travel Table	0
Unavailability	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

Select a problem from the 'Constraint Type' and click on the 'Problems' tab.

**Figure 3. Activities with a Specific Problem**

Constraint: Avoid Resource Mismatch  
 Activities: 107151~2-L1/01  
 Objects involved: 107151~2-L1/01  
 Resource Mismatch - 107151~2-L1/01: Staff  
 Total: 1 Problem

The Problem tab shows all the associated activities with this type of problem. By selecting the object in window **1** you are given further information about what the problem is in window **2** – in this case the Resource mismatch is the staff member attached to the activity. By ‘double clicking’ the activity/object in the Activities window **3** you can bring up the problem activities that you wish to fix.

Once you have fixed the Activities the problem count should decrease.

Write back all changes to the main database.

Things to Note:

1. You should only fix problems if you are the one that has caused it. If you fix other people’s problems on your machine, you can cause the database to become confused (something that’s easily done).
2. Changing the time of an activity is the most common cause of a problem. Changing the duration (and modifying it), then changing it back will usually fix this problem
3. Uncheduling the offending activity will always make the problem go away.

## **Contact Us**

If you have any questions, or would like to give us some feedback, please feel free to get in touch with us. You can email us at:

[sa-timetable@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sa-timetable@unimelb.edu.au) , or give us a call.

Sandi Robertson – Timetable Coordinator x49689

Matt Wright - Timetabling Systems Support x43690

Kamila Kaniski – Timetable Officer x47699

Chris Thornton – Manager, Timetabling, Venue & Conference Management x48858