

Syllabus Plus Users Information Update – Mar/Apr 2006 Edition 14

Introduction

Welcome to another issue of the Syllabus Plus update. Quite a bit of this issue is devoted to the imminent upgrade of Syllabus Plus, but there is also a handy tip in relation to the 'Browse mode' feature in the program.

Current Syllabus Plus Issues

Syllabus Plus Upgrade

Syllabus Plus will be upgraded from version 3.4.0 to version 3.5.0 on Thursday the 13th April. This date was identified as a day on which a minimum of users would be affected by the program not being available.

How long will the upgrade take?

Hopefully Syllabus Plus will be out of action only on 13th April. If unforeseen problems arise however, there is a possibility that it might be out for more than one day.

Why are we upgrading to the new version?

There are a large number of extra features and problem fixes in the new version that will for the most part make life easier for those scheduling the timetable. Some of the upgrade features will however be of use to those of you making bookings or using the timetable for read only purposes as well. Some of the more interesting new features are listed on the page over.

What do I need to do in relation to the Upgrade process?

1. You need to arrange with your LITE to have the new 3.5.0 version of Syllabus Plus installed. You should let your LITE know that as is the case with the current version, the SPlus 3.5.0 software and instructions for its installation can be found on 'Softdist'. Make sure whilst they are installing the new software that they update the licence file as well.
2. Once the program has been installed, you will need to download a new 3.5.0 version of the image from the server. Your username and password should remain the same as in version 3.4.0.

Do I need to do anything else?

It would probably be a good idea to be as up to date with your bookings as possible by the evening of Wednesday 12 Apr. You can also install the new version of the program prior to the 13th Apr (see below).

Can the new version of the program be installed from 'Softdist' prior Thursday 13th April?

Yes. We would actually recommend that you complete step 1 of the upgrade process prior to the upgrade. SPlus 3.5.0 is available on Softdist now if you would like to install it. You just won't be able to complete step 2 of the upgrade process until after we have let you know that the upgrade has been successful.

How will we know when Syllabus Plus is up and running again?

We will send out an Email to all Syllabus Plus users to let you know when you are able to connect to version 3.5.0 of Syllabus Plus. You will not be able to connect to the server prior to this.

What features are in the new version?

There are a lot of new features in this version of Syllabus Plus. Some of the more interesting ones (with comments) have been listed below.

- Grid lines have been added to the Allocate tab of the Activity Template window.
For schedulers having to deal with lists of over 100 tutorials this will stop you from going cross-eyed.
- Unallocated Student Sets can now be easily identified by their bold font in the Allocate tab of the Activity Template window.
- The number of reasons why an activity cannot be scheduled (as displayed under the timetable grid) was formerly limited to 8 but can now be configured by the user to show up to 100 reasons.
This will enable schedulers to easily identify if a problem class is going to be tough, or really tough to schedule at a particular time.
- Word wrapping in User Text 1 has been improved.
It didn't used to wrap at all.
- It is now possible to filter the all object windows by week(s).
This should be handy method for identifying free spots on the timetable during any particular week, or taking 'snapshots' of the timetable.
- It is now possible to drill down to the module window from the module list in the Activity window even if the Activity is linked to an Activity Template.
This was previously a feature of Syllabus Plus. Thankfully it has returned.
- The previous limit of 32000 objects as the maximum that could be displayed in a home list has been removed.
The number of activities (classes and bookings) that we had on the timetable last year was actually hovering around the 32000 mark. We will now no longer need to worry about going over this amount.
- The main documents accompanying the software are now supplied as compiled help files which are installed with the software and can be accessed from the help menu.
Should now be able to easily access help information in a similar manner to the bulk of other software programs.
- When creating a duplicate of an existing object, a Syllabus Plus Hostkey was generated even when the user supplied a unique hostkey. The user-supplied hostkey is now used instead. In the case where the user supplies a non-unique hostkey, Syllabus Plus will revert to an automatically generated hostkey.
Will now be somewhat quicker (and less annoying) to duplicate objects (locations, modules, classes etc) in Syllabus Plus.

I've still got questions about the upgrade.

If you have any queries at all about the upgrade process, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the end of the newsletter.

Syllabus Plus Tip – Browse Mode (Ctrl + B)

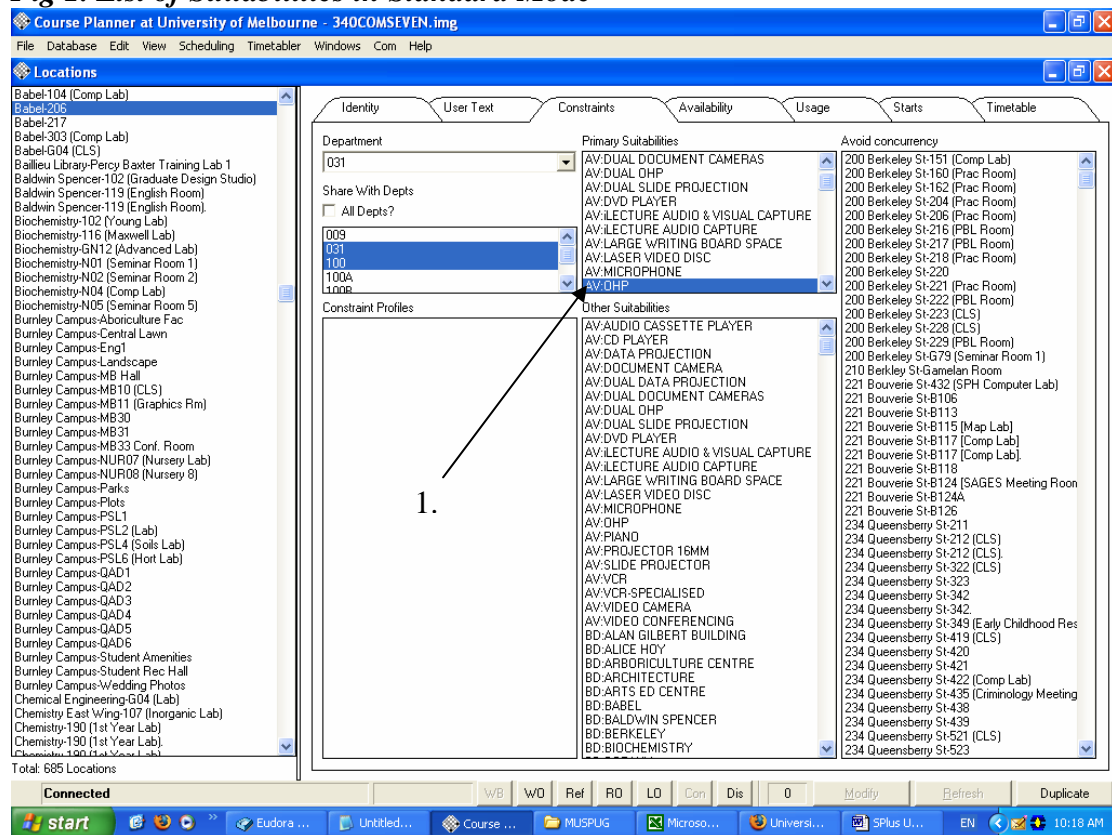
Quite a few ‘objects’ (i.e. locations or activities) in Syllabus Plus are linked to long lists of suitabilities (i.e. AV equipment).

For example, any given location on campus has numerous features attached including audio facilities (data projector, computer, video etc), building and room type.

From the Location screen, you can see which features are attached by scrolling through the Primary Suitabilities field and noting which items in this field are selected.

The lists of suitabilities is however quite long, and it can take some time to scroll through and identify exactly which features are in the room (1.).

Fig 1. List of Suitabilities in Standard Mode

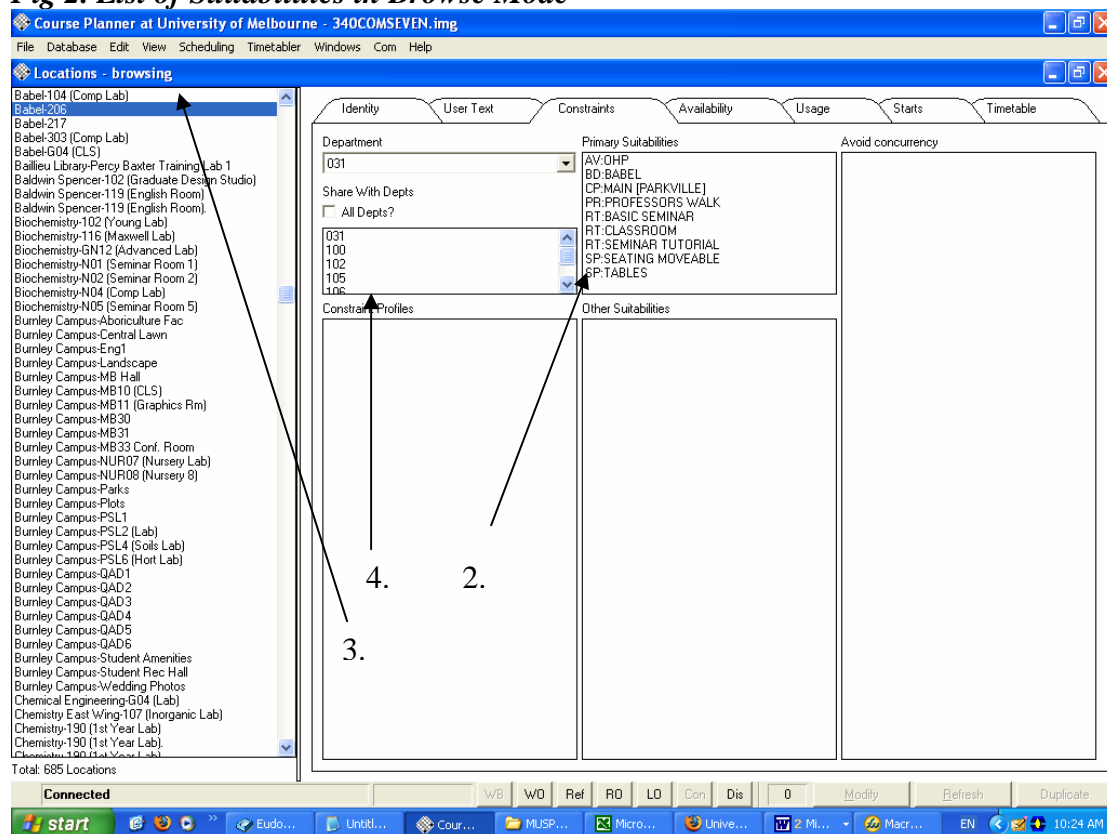


In Browse Mode, only the suitabilities that are attached to a particular object are shown. This can be seen in Figure 2 below, where only the room features for Babel 206 are displayed (2.).

You can engage Browse mode by selecting ‘Browse’ from the ‘View’ menu, or by simply pressing Ctrl + B. To disengage Browse mode, simply select ‘Browse’ from the view menu again, or press Ctrl + B.

When you are in Browse mode, it is indicated in the title bar (3.).

Fig 2. List of Suitabilities in Browse Mode



Note that in the example above that the list of departments that can use the room has also been set to the Browse format (4.).

Also note that whilst in Browse mode you are unable to make changes in Syllabus Plus. If you suddenly find yourself unable to make alterations or new bookings in Syllabus Plus, check that you are not in Browse mode.

Other News

Kamila, our devoted Timetable Officer, has decided that it is time to move on. All our efforts to encourage her to stay have unfortunately failed miserably. She will be heading off to travel/work overseas in the next couple of weeks. We wish her well!

Contact Us

Please feel free to get in touch with us if you have any feedback sa-timetable@unimelb.edu.au, or give us a call.

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