Questions on the NST Part IA practical allocation system

FOR COLLEGE STAFF ENTERING DATA

HOW DO I LOG ON TO ENTER STUDENTS’ DETAILS?
WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE PROBLEMS LOGGING ON?

You can access the data input web pages either from the NST website, or by going directly to:

https://nstreg.admin.cam.ac.uk/nst-reg/dos/dosStudentEntry.htm

Some example screenshots are provided at the end of this document.

You will need your Raven Password to log on. More information is available from these UIS pages:

For New Staff: https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/new-starters/academic-staff

Forgotten Password: https://password.raven.cam.ac.uk/forgotten-passwd

If you still have problems logging on, please contact the NST Administrator at natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk.

HOW LONG SHOULD ENTERING A STUDENT’S DETAILS TAKE?

Providing you have all of this information, data entry via the web pages will take less than thirty seconds per student. The web pages will also display all of the students already entered for your College so you can see at a glance who has already been entered.

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU NEED ABOUT EACH STUDENT?

You will need to know the following information for each student:

• their CRSID and name;
• their Tripos;
• their subject choices within the Natural Sciences Tripos (including their Maths subject)

There is also a field to add a comment of free text to alert the administrator to any individual needs or problems. Please note that this field should NOT be used for individual timetable requests (see below).

We are asking that you enter a provisional choice for each student by the provisional deadline, it is up to the College to determine whether you will ask students for this choice or if you will enter a best guess at their subjects based on their application.

For the final deadline of the Tuesday, it is well-recognised that not all students are certain of their future pathway through the NST by this very early point in their career. It
is important, however, that a complete set of subject choices (however provisional) is entered for each student to allow the Departments to manage the numbers of students they will have to provide laboratory space for, and to allocate students as efficiently as possible.

**How do I change a student’s provisional choice and what if I make a mistake about the data I enter?**

At any time, you can “recall” a student’s information simply by typing in their CRSID. You can overwrite any information you have already entered (and the system will warn you that this is what you are doing.)

If you have entered information for a student who should not be included (i.e. you want to delete the student), contact the Administrator (natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk).

**What if I don’t know a student’s CRSID?**

The preferred way to select a student for data input is by typing in their CRSID. Their details (including full name and College) should appear for you to be sure you have selected the right one. You should also be able to search for a CRSID if you have the name of the student, using the Lookup Service linked to on the same page.

As a last resort, it is possible to type instead only a name and College, but this will not allow the system to pass on to the student their individualised timetable and you will need to arrange to print out their timetable on their behalf and provide it. You are therefore strongly advised against using this facility – check if you have made a typo in entering their CRSID, and/or check with UIS why the student does not appear in the Lookup Service.

**Why is there a provisional choice deadline?**

Due to a number of factors the pressure on the allocation system has been increasing over the past years; the number of places available in Laboratories are close to capacity in some instances, and due to the restricted timetable for allocations there is a danger that a satisfactory allocation solution will not be available for the start of teaching. The NST Management Committee have therefore decided to continue the preliminary deadline so that the allocation system can determine areas of potential oversubscription, resolve individual timetable needs, identify problematic subject choice combinations and a solution can be determined for these issues.

**Why is the deadline for student registration 10.30 on the Tuesday?**

The deadline has been chosen to meet a number of conflicting needs of the Departments and the Colleges. Obviously, Colleges need time to discuss with their students their final choice of the subjects they wish to study but equally the Departments need time to prepare for practical classes which may start on the Thursday. The allocation process takes time to run and those running the process need to have time to consult with Departments where there is pressure on capacity.
The live system allows you to correct inputted information, so it is possible to enter provisional information in advance providing this is corrected by the deadline.

Please note that this is a different – and separate – process to that of examination entries via CamSIS (where the deadlines are further into Term).

**WHAT IF I MISS THE DEADLINE?**

The allocation process will run as soon as the deadline has passed.

The allocator only works effectively if all of the student details have been entered, which is why it is so important for all the information to be entered by the deadline. If student details are not included by the time the allocation process is run, they will not be allocated practical classes for any of their subjects. Students and Directors of Studies will then be responsible for arranging registration with the individual Departments and/or course organisers. If you discover that information has been omitted please contact the Administrator as soon as possible (natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk).

The allocation system does not get updated, and no data (beyond summary statistics) will be retained as a permanent record.

**WHAT IF A STUDENT IS UNDECIDED ABOUT THEIR CHOICES?**

For the first provisional deadline we ask that you enter your best guess at the student’s choices but we are well aware that this might change following discussions with Directors of Studies and fellow students.

*It is important that (at least) a provisional set of subject choices is registered for each student by 10.30 am on the Tuesday.* A number of students do change their minds in the first weeks of the Michaelmas Term and they will continue to have to negotiate these changes via their Directors of Studies.

The practical allocation system will be a one-off event on the Tuesday before lectures: any changes to subject choices will not need to be registered by the system and will be captured by the examination entry process via CamSIS.

If a student changes their mind before the Tuesday deadline, you can simply overwrite the existing subject choices by entering their CRSID again. The system will warn you if you are overwriting existing information.

**WHAT IF A STUDENT WANTS TO “TRY” AN ADDITIONAL SUBJECT IN THE SHORT TERM, OR HAS AN IRREGULAR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS?**

The on-line registration system will not allow students to register for more than the formal number of subjects to be studied. The number of places on practical classes has become too tight to allow students to undertake this freely. If students wish to register for an additional subject, they may be able to do so by contacting the individual Department or course organiser after the allocations has been completed, but only if there are places available.

The system will only allow you to enter permitted combinations of subjects for that Tripos. If an irregular combination (or number) of subjects needs to be entered, you will need to contact the Administrator (natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk).
WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS PARTICULAR NEEDS AND WANTS TO REGISTER ON A PARTICULAR DAY?

Special requests for practical classes on particular days (or avoiding particular days) will only be allowed in extenuating circumstances and for good educational or pastoral reasons. Examples of this would include students with limited mobility or other related issues, students with particular religious requirements, etc.

These students will have their practical classes “hardwired” before the allocation process starts.

If you have a case that requires pre-registration, please contact the Administrator (natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk) as soon as you can and preferably by the provisional choice deadline. It is vital that we have this information at least 24 hours ahead of the final deadline with precise details of the required timetable. You may find it helpful to refer to the online timetable at https://www.timetable.cam.ac.uk/

WHEN AND HOW WILL STUDENTS HEAR ABOUT THEIR INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLE?

All NST students will be informed by email of their individualised timetable by 9 am on the Wednesday before lectures start at the latest. This should allow them time to arrange supervisions and collect any material required prior to lectures starting.

OTHER TRIPPOSES

- Students on all other Triposes taking NST IA papers are allocated manually, and their details should be supplied to the NST Administrator via natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk, rather than being registered in the online system.
- All such students will receive an email with information on the NST components of their course (such as their practical group allocations for NST IA Maths / Physics / Evolution and Behaviour etc. as applicable).

WHAT OTHER INFORMATION WILL STUDENTS BE TOLD ABOUT?

Students will receive an email on the Tuesday afternoon about induction sessions and practicalities such as lab coats, calculators etc. The timetable email will include subject specific information where relevant.

WHAT IF A STUDENT WANTS TO CHANGE A SUBJECT OR A PRACTICAL SLOT ONCE THE ALLOCATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE?

Students are asked to consult with their Directors of Studies before any changes are negotiated. They should then contact the relevant course directors as listed on the NST website here: https://www.natsci.tripos.cam.ac.uk/contacts/course-organisers

It is important that all subjects are kept informed of any changes — including those that a student may no longer be taking. Practical Coordinators try to be as accommodating as possible but it is possible that some practical slots will have reached capacity. You may find it helpful to look at the online timetable at: https://www.timetable.cam.ac.uk/
WHAT INFORMATION WILL I GET BACK OUT OF THE SYSTEM?

You will also be able to access timetable information for each of the students you inputted, and may choose to alert them to their timetable if they are unable to access their email by the Wednesday morning.

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EXAMPLE SCREENSHOTS

SELECT A STUDENT

You MUST have the student's identifier – this will be used to send them an email informing them of their individualised timetable.

You can use the University Lookup Service link on that page to search for their CRSID identifier if you do not have it.

As a last resort you may proceed without an ID, but you will then need to have a College mechanism for students to obtain their timetable from you or someone else in the College.

Students will need to be able to access their @cam accounts.
EXAMPLE SCREENSHOTS

CONFIRM THE STUDENT’S DETAILS

You will be able to alter both the name and College of the student concerned if the details are wrong. Please be certain that you have the correct ID if this is the case.

The system will alert you if the ID you have entered does not correspond to a student.

You will only be allowed to proceed if the student is a member of your College.
Please pay close attention to any ALERT MESSAGES. These will always appear on a yellow background.

This alert message indicates that the ID entered has not found a student on the UIS Lookup Service database. If you are sure the ID is correct (and therefore also the student’s email address), you can edit the name and College and proceed.

Before doing this, please check carefully that you have not made a typo, check whether you can find the student on the Lookup Service, and then check with UIS why they do not appear in Lookup/why they have a different ID in Lookup.

There is also an opportunity to alert the administrator if you feel that would be helpful in explaining what has happened.
EXAMPLE SCREENSHOTS
(Please note that EMB and Computer Science are no longer available as NST IA options, and students on other Triposes taking NST papers should NOT be registered on this system)

SELECT THE COURSES – Natural Sciences Tripos example

Confirm the appropriate Tripos for the student and check the boxes for the subjects the student has chosen. **NOTE:** Only students taking the full Natural Sciences Tripos should be entered into this system.

*Students on other Triposes* taking NST papers are allocated manually, and their details should be supplied to the NST Administrator via natsci@admin.cam.ac.uk.

The system knows the appropriate subject combination rules and will alert you if an improper selection is made.

*(NB – EMB and Computer Science are no longer available as NST IA options)*
On completion, you are informed of the information that has been saved.

At this point you can either: log out; or start again with another student.