Course Selector
Helping students choose valid combinations of courses

Description:

◆ Students in the Department of Business Studies at the University of Edinburgh have wide flexibility in their course choices
  ◆ but timetable clashes rule out some courses
  ◆ and Department regulations require some outside courses to be taken for 2 or 3 years.
◆ Directors of Studies used to spend 15-20 minutes explaining this to each of 50-60 students.
◆ Course Selector is a knowledge based system that advises on legal course combinations and sensible course choices.

Technical approach:

◆ Knowledge acquired from one interview and from the University Calendar.
◆ Knowledge analysed and system designed using KADS methodology.
◆ System implemented using CLIPS, “stripped down” for delivery on student lab PCs.
◆ Used ‘negative truth maintenance’ – course Y was marked as unavailable due to clash with course X, unless course X was deselected.
◆ Entire project took 8 man weeks.
◆ Success due to good methodology and structure-preserving design.

Benefits:

◆ Students no longer needed to navigate through the 800-page University Calendar.
◆ Automatically found timetable clashes (including one between two required courses for a joint degree).
◆ Directors of Studies now spent 5 minutes per student in the first week of the academic year instead of 15-20 minutes.
◆ Students can keep a disk of course choices from previous years to reduce the input required in later years.

AIAI and the University of Edinburgh Management School
http://www.aiai.ed.ac.uk/project/courseselector/