How do I set up areas for student collaboration in Moodle?

**Moodle Help & Support**
This refers to Moodle 2.7 from July 2015 onward

How to set up areas for student collaboration in Moodle

Moodle has several activities suitable for learners to work together as a whole class or in groups of various sizes. This tutorial brings together a variety of ways to use features in Moodle to promote student collaboration.

Possible benefits: These collaboration tools allow you to set up group working exercises in the same way as you might in a classroom or other situation outside Moodle.

This tutorial looks at:

- Working with groups
- Signup Sheets
- Group and collaborative activities
- Forums
- Wikis
- Database
- Glossary
- Chat
- Assignments
- Turnitin assignments

Working with groups

- All Help Sheets on working with Groups includes information on working with groups, creating groups, exporting lists of students placed in a group

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How to create groups and groupings

Moodle allows creation of groups and groupings (which are "supergroups").

Groups allows you to split up your class into groups and assign activities and resources to those groups.

Groups can be Separate (people in that group can only see their relevant materials, activities e.g. discussions in forums etc.) or Visible (people in that group can see the materials and activities for all groups but cannot interact with or contribute to other groups e.g. forums, only to their own).

First Step - Enable groups in your module

- Navigate to the module you want to work on
- Find the Administration block and then click on Module administration > Edit Settings
- Under the Groups heading change Group mode to "Separate groups" or "Visible groups"
- Change Force group mode to "Yes" if you want to ensure that groups are then enabled for each activity/resource you then add to the module (although this sets the default for ALL activities then created, this can be amended in each activity during creation).
Showing group membership

You can allow students to see who is in which group by adding the People block

If you select 'Visible groups', then users can sort Participants by group, if you select Separate groups, participants will see only a list of their own group members under Participants.

The difference between groups and groupings

With Groupings you can create "supergroups" out of your existing groups, allowing you to bunch different groups together into a larger one. For example, a collection of lab Groups taught on a different day to another collection of lab Groups could be clumped into Groupings labelled as that teaching day in order to differentiate them. Groupings is more to aid teaching staff on a module, particularly when it comes to marking; students do not see the grouping title, they only see their Group title.

How to create groups

Find the Administration block and click on Module administration > Users > Groups

1. Click on the Create group button, and give it a Group name (mandatory) and Group description (e.g. who the marker(s) will be). The rest of the fields are optional.
2. Click on the Save changes button and the new group will appear in the left-hand column.
3. Select the new group in the left-hand column entitled 'Groups:'.
4. Click on the Add/remove users button under the right-hand column entitled 'Members of:'. A new screen will appear where you can add the students enrolled on your course to your new group. These are found in the right-hand column labelled "Potential members".
   a. Search for a student
   b. Select the student and click on the Add button. You will also need to add Teachers if you wish them to take part in the activity and be restricted to that Group. Editing Teachers can access all Groups. NOTE: A student CAN be part of more than one Group.
   c. Once finished, click on the Back to groups button.
How to create groupings

1. Find the Administration block and click on Module administration > Users > Groups. Then click on the "Groupings" tab.
2. Click on the Create grouping button and give it a Grouping name.
3. Click on the Save changes button.
4. Click on the "Show groups in grouping" icon to the right of your new Grouping.
5. Add the Group (or more than one Group) you created to the Grouping by selecting the Group(s) from the right-hand column (Potential members) and click on the Add button.
6. Click on the Back to groupings button.
7. You should now see the names of the Groups you have added into that Grouping.
Video - How to create, populate, edit, and delete a group

Signup Sheets

The Moodle sign-up sheet can be used for many purposes - some examples include signing up for events such as careers fairs, indicating project choices and creating project groups for collaborative work.

Note: The groups formed by this system are not the same as Moodle's own groups and cannot be used in Moodle activities, therefore Signup Sheets are best used to form groups that are active outside Moodle.

See also

How to export a sign-up list from the Signup Sheet tool

Group and collaborative activities

There are a number of activities in Moodle which allow groups of students to work together either privately (separate groups) or with sight of, but not access to, other groups (visible groups).

- Forums
- Wikis
- Database
- Glossary
- Chat
- Assignments
- Turnitin assignments

Using Discussion forums, wikis or Chat Rooms with Moodle groups enables students to work together in groups, on a collaborative task or project.

Students can also submit group assignments - either (1) one student submits for all in the group and it's automatically applied against the others in the group as soon as submitted, or (2) each student has to approve the submission of their own group's piece.

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How to create a forum with groups

To allow groups of students to have a discussion together, you can set up a forum with groups.

It is the same forum, but people in a group can only reply to those in the same group.
An Editing teacher will be able to see everyone's responses.

**To enable Groups in your course:**

1. Find the Administration block then click on Module administration > Edit settings then scroll down to Groups and open section
2. Choose from ‘Visible groups’ or ‘Separate groups’
   a. **Separate groups** are used so that the students do not see what one another are doing. So far as they are concerned they are the only group in the forum.
   b. **Visible groups** means they can see the postings of the other groups but may not reply to them
3. Click on the Save changes button

Now set up your groups (See: How To create groups and groupings)

**To set up a forum with groups**

1. Navigate to your module and click on the **Turn editing on** button (top right).
2. In the Section/Topic where you’d like the forum, click on the + Add an activity or resource hyperlink
3. Select Forum and click on the Add button

The window Adding a new Forum will open

3. Enter a **Forum name**
4. Give the forum a **Description**. This is where the instructions or guidelines will go, or, for Single Simple Discussion, this will be the first post.

5. Select the **Forum type** you want.

There are 5 types of discussion forums (in addition to the News (Announcements) forum)

a. **A single simple discussion**: this is a single-topic forum. The Description is the first post and users can
only reply to that
original topic, not create new ones.
b. Each person posts one discussion: handy for class introductions, each user can only post one discussion topic (replies are not limited).
c. Q and A forum: this forum allows you to post a question (or questions) and students must reply with their answers first before seeing other student responses.
d. Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format (most recent post at the top)
e. Standard forum for general use: anyone can post new topics/subjects and reply to this forum.

6. Under the Attachments and word count heading you can specify max size and number of attachments allowed, and whether a word count is displayed.

7. Under the Subscription and tracking heading you can decide on the Subscription mode you want

There are 4 subscription mode options:

1. Optional subscription - Participants can choose whether to be subscribed (but are not to start with). See How to change whether I get emails from a forum
2. Forced subscription - Everyone is subscribed and cannot unsubscribe (similar to the News forum).
3. Auto subscription - Everyone is subscribed initially but can choose to unsubscribe at any time. See How to change whether I get emails from a forum
4. Subscription disabled - Subscriptions are not allowed.

Auto subscription is recommended. All participants will get the first post automatically and can then choose to turn subscription off if they wish. The first post can include details of how to do this.

8. Under the Common module settings heading, in the Group mode drop-down menu select ‘Separate groups’ or ‘Visible groups’

9. Click on the Save and return to module button

Posting messages in the forum

You can now go into the forum and start posting messages.

- Click into the forum
- Select the group or groups to whom you want the message to be visible by clicking on the Visible groups or Separate groups drop-down menu and select group(s).

“All participants” will post a message visible to all groups but the students will not be able to reply.

Alternatively you can post a message to a particular group, and then students in that group will be able to reply.

If students start a thread it will be visible only to their group.

The editing teacher can always see all postings from all groups.

- Once the group is selected, Click on the Add a new discussion topic button
- Type a Subject and Message
- Add any attachments if appropriate
- Click on the Post to forum button

Similar tutorials

The following other resources are also relevant to this topic:
How to change whether I get emails from a forum

Other pages about Moodle forums

- I'd like to change the number of emails Moodle sends me
- Magic with Moodle 10 - Using forums to answer student questions
- Magic with Moodle 12 - Using forums with groups
- How can I see when new items are added to a forum in my module?
- How to add a forum
- How to change whether I get emails from a forum
- How to create a forum for groups

Other pages about Moodle groups

- Groups in Moodle
- How to create a metalink to enrol students from another module
- Working with groups of students
- How to export a list of students who are placed in a group
- How To create groups and groupings
- How to send a message to groups of students or participants
- Magic with Moodle 12 - Using forums with groups
- How to allow students to self-enrol on a module and into a given group
- How to enable group submissions in a Moodle assignment
- Managing tutorial registers online with Moodle
- How to add a forum
- How to export a sign-up list from the Signup Sheet tool
- How to use the Signup Sheet Tool
- An overview of how to use Groups and Groupings effectively
- How do I set up areas for student collaboration in Moodle?

Possible benefits:

These collaboration tools allow you to set up group working exercises in a way similar to the classroom.

Queries, comments or questions?

Please contact your local elearning support team.
Incorrect?

If you have any comments on how you think this help can be improved then please email Learning-Technologies@nottingham.ac.uk