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

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

This refers to Moodle 2.7 from July 2015 onward

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.

- More on how to create and use Signup Sheets

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.

- More on How to create a forum with groups
- More on Working with groups of students

Group assignments

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.

- How to enable group submissions in a Moodle assignment

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

- 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
- Magic with Moodle 10 - Using forums to answer student questions
- I'd like to change the number of emails Moodle sends me
- Magic with Moodle 12 - Using forums with groups
- How to create a forum for groups

Other pages about Moodle groups

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

Possible benefits:

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