

# Magic with Moodle 17 - Databases for Assessment

## Using databases for assessment

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NOOC / Nottingham Advantage Award  
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[Link to Case Study \(as Word document\)](#)

### Background

Perspectives on Sustainability was Nottingham's first open online course and had over 800 participants, over 100 of whom initially signed up to take it for credit (10 or 20 credits) for the Nottingham Advantage Award. With such large numbers we wanted the assessments to be easy to submit, easy to mark (perhaps using automatic marking or peer assessment) and we needed to easily monitor completion. Because this was an Advantage Award module we had a little more freedom to experiment with assessment. As it was an open course we also wanted the artifacts that students produced to be openly available to other students and for future iterations of the course.

### What did you do?

We created two databases for two different assessments.

**The Image Bank:** Students were asked to submit two images relating to the History of Sustainability. Teachers on the module could grade these, and once a grade was awarded (we used a simple pass or fail) then Moodle automatically marked the assessment as complete for that student. We also set up the database to require two submissions by each student. All submissions were and remain fully viewable by all participants and they can comment on them.

**Poster submission:** Students were asked to submit a poster on a topic associated with sustainability. Moodle was set up to allow students to grade this activity and were encouraged to "rate" other students' posters according to a rubric we provided. This allowed a form of peer assessment.

### How did it work out?

The image bank was easy to grade but required tutors and facilitators to do it so took up a little time. The students could readily see each others' submissions and comment, as well. Completion tracking in the module enabled us and the students to see whether they had completed the assessment or not. The Poster was also easy to grade and early submissions had several ratings, but staff had to help grade later submissions as fewer students were engaged in the activity by then.

### What did students think?

Students could choose to submit to the image bank as one of their assessments: there were 130 submissions with typically 4 or 5 comments. There were posters and

Image Bank: 66% of the students who attempted it rated it as Good or Excellent

Posters: This was a popular activity with over 93% of the students who attempted it rating it as good or excellent

### Recommendations and tips

The database takes a little bit of time to set up initially but worked extremely well, especially combined with completion tracking. It was easy for students to submit to, easy to mark, and students were able to make comments on each others, too.

The peer assessment relied on students' interest and motivation (later submissions were less likely to be graded by peers), so for a more formal peer assessment, or higher stakes assessment, the Moodle Workshop tool would be more effective. However, facilitators were able to grade the late submissions so it worked well for us.

### More information

See it for yourself:

- Self-enrol on the Perspectives in Sustainability module and check Week 2 (Image Bank) and Week 8 (Poster submission)  
Click "Participate in this module"
  - [NOOC1 \(not currently available\)](#)
  - [NOOC2 running currently](#)

How to achieve this:

- Moodle Help Guide: [How to add a database activity](#)
- Moodle Help Guide: Conditional activities and completion tracking

Videos / webinar recordings

- 16 May 2013 [Recording of webinar on conditional release](#)

### **Other ideas**

Another assessment in this module was a SWOT analysis. Students were given a [template for a SWOT Analysis](#) of a company or organisation's sustainability strategy and shared them with each other for peer review. PeerMark can be used for peer assessment like this. See also [Magic with Moodle 20 - Peer Evaluation](#) Get in touch with [learning-technologies@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:learning-technologies@nottingham.ac.uk) for help if you'd like to try this.