Working with groups of students

Moodle Help & Support

Working with groups of students

On this page

Students can be arranged into groups in different ways depending on your overall need. The paragraphs below look at the different options and how they can be useful to you when managing groups of students.

Turn on Group mode

Always ensure that Groups are turned on in your module before using them.

Administration > Module Administration > Edit Settings > Scroll down to Groups and open section > Set group mode to Separate groups (or visible groups if you prefer)

Using groups

The steps are:

Step 1 Deciding which students go in the groups. Options include:

- Random (Moodle can assign them randomly) OR
- Staff member decides or is given a list, e.g., of groups which run across modules OR
- Students choose the group they wish to be in using a sign up sheet (for this, use the SIgn Up Sheet tool)

Step 2 Setting up the group

Depending on need

- It may be enough to use the features of Sign Up Sheets (if all you need to do is email the group and print off a list) OR
- You can create groups in Moodle

When creating groups in the module (See: How to create groups and groupings) there are various ways you can group students together.

Step 3 Using groups

Once you have created your groups you can give them activities to do in their groups (e.g., forums) or sort assignments by group

Signup Sheet groups

The Signup Sheet allows students to make a choice of one group or slot. When complete, you can manually make Moodle groups now that you know which students have signed up to a particular slot.

Also, once students have chosen their sessions or other group via the Sign Up Sheet activity you can email the groups allocated to each slot from the activity. This type of group is only applicable to the Signup Sheet activity and does not impact on usage of other activities. It makes a kind of easy access distribution list for you, enabling you to communicate to individual groups without having to choose the recipients. Also, students can change which group they're in ensuring the distribution list is always up-to-date.

Module (manual) groups

These are manual groups created by the Editing Teacher. In the module settings (In the **Administration** block - **Module administration** > **Edit settings**) you can choose, in the **Groups** > **Group mode** drop-down menu between **Visible** and **Separate** groups; this automatically sets this for each new activity created as well as affecting the visibility of Participants in the module for students and staff. Visible groups allow students to see what the other groups are doing but not participate, they can only participate in their groups. Separate groups can only see and participate in their group. These settings can be amended in each activity separately.

Manual groups impact on the following:

- **Activities**: Chat, Choice, Database, Forum. This allows you to create an activity for the module that has restricted access according to groups.
    - For example - With Forums you can create completely different posts for the different groups that are only visible to that group (meaning only that group will receive email notifications for that post).
- **Participants**: Helps students and staff when sending a message to students as it allows you to flick between the different groups and all participants. For module settings set to Separate groups students will not be able to see any participants outside their group.
- **Assignments**: Both Moodle and Turnitin assignments can be managed using groups. When it comes to grading you can separate the submissions into the groups.
    - For Example - This can be helpful if the module is taught by multiple lecturers that have responsibility for a particular group of students. Manual groups could be created behind the scenes. Module settings could be set to No Groups but the assignments set to Visible Groups. This would not affect the students' participation but would help teaching staff manage grading of assignments.
    - NOTE that assignments can NOT be set to be seen only by one group, and you cannot set different dates for different groups, it just helps you sort the papers for marking. All students see and can submit to all assignments (There is a very complicated and time-consuming workaround for this but it does not work in all cases.)

You can restrict access to a resource or an activity to one group (or grouping)

- See How to release resources to students at different times or in different groups

Groupings

Groupings are "super-groups". Groupings can contain one or more groups.

Worked example:

Students are working in four groups to submit an assignment. Groups A, B, C and D

There are two assignment briefs, each used by two of the groups.

You can make the assignment brief visible as follows

Assignment brief 1: visible to Grouping 1 (consisting of Groups A and B)

Assignment brief 2: visible to Grouping 2 (consisting of Groups C and D)

Messaging students in a group

1. In navigation block under Current module click Participants
2. Drop down the menu under Separate Groups (or Visible groups) and select the group
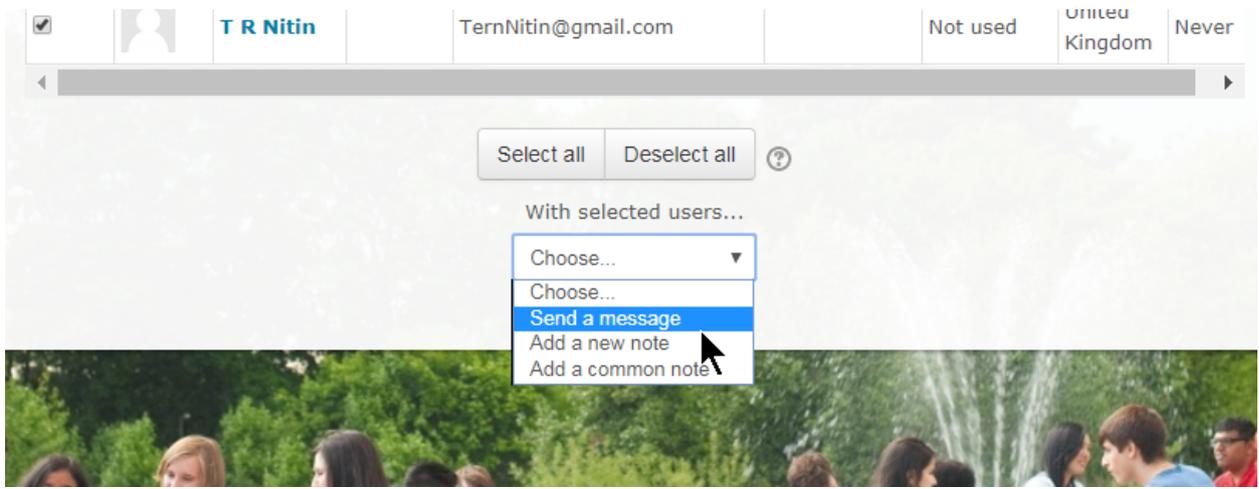
Participants

Separate groups

Group A ▼

3. Select all the members of the group

☑ Julia Martin   TR

4. Choose "Send a message"

| ☑ | | **T R Nitin** | TernNitin@gmail.com | | Not used | United Kingdom | Never |

Select all   Deselect all ⊙

With selected users...

Choose... ▼

Choose...
Send a message
Add a new note
Add a common note

5. Write your message and send message. REMINDER: Add details of the module, your name etc., to give the message context, as Moodle does not add a subject line.
Note: this doesn't necessarily go by email as it depends on users' settings.

To create an email list:

1. Go to Navigation block > Current module > Grades
2. Select a group
3. From the Grader report menu select Export > Excel spreadsheet > unclick everything so no graesd are included.
4. The spreadsheet will include an email address column for the Group chosen which you can easily turn into an email list.

Similar tutorials

The following other resources are also relevant to this topic:

- How to release resources to students at different times or in different groups
- How to edit module settings
- How to send a message to groups of students or participants
- How to create a Choice activity
- How To create groups and groupings
- How to use the Signup Sheet Tool