Module formats explained

Moodle Help & Support

This refers to Moodle 3.8 from September 2020 onward

Module formats explained

This help document explains the purpose of, and how each module format (set in the module settings) can be used in Moodle.

First enter the module you want to format. The module format can then be selected through the Cogwheel (Course Actions) menu > Edit settings

Under the heading "Module format" it is possible to select which format you want for the module

In order of usefulness:

Topics format

This is the most frequently used module format. You can title each section as you wish and highlight an important section e.g. assessments manually to draw the attention of students at particular times during the module. Links to previous and next items are shown at the bottom of every displayed resource or activity, plus a "Jump to" field allowing the user to jump to any other item.

There is an option for this format to show all sections or one section at a time. If the module is set to show one section at a time on the page, only the title of the sections will display. If one section is selected, a "Jump to" field is displayed allowing the user to jump to a chosen section. There are also options to select the previous or next section.

We recommend that as little content as possible is put in the "Description" of the topic/section. A maximum of a line or two. Put most content in a label or other Resource type. This makes it easier to edit, and possible to copy, including within the same module or between modules, and to move the content around.

You can use labels to give context to the activities and make the page more attractive

Activity - What do students need from us? [Core strand]

Let's think about our own experiences as students, and the experiences of the students we teach, and think about what help our students might need. In the rest of the week we'll look at who our students/learners are, what needs they have and how to meet those needs. Let's start to build a narrative of how a learner of yours might learn in a well-designed online or blended class.

The following is Topics Format with 'One Section Per Page' chosen
Collapsed topics format

This format is essentially the same as the Topics format but sections can be collapsed to reduce student overload when looking at a busy page. The content sections can be toggled open or closed. There are also options to Open all or Close all sections.

Example of collapsed topics:

This is Collapsed Topics with 'Show the Section Summary when Collapsed' - a good use of text in the Section Description.
Weekly format (not normally recommended)

This format is presented in a similar way to the Topics format, but instead of section headings, the relevant week dates will be provided (start date determined in the module settings). You can still edit the section titles. If you originally had your module set to Topics format and entered section titles, by changing to Weekly format the section titles will not be automatically changed to the week dates, you will have to manually set this in each section title. This format removes the manual highlighting functionality; instead the current week will be highlighted automatically.

We tend to recommend the Topics or Collapsed Topics formats. The Weekly format will create sections matching the weeks starting with the official start date of your course/module. As Campus Solutions tends to give this as 1 August, the weekly format does not work well. Also, one invariably wants to add an additional Section or Sections for, e.g., Extra Reading, Feedback, Assessment or similar. It is just as easy to edit the Topics format titles as to edit a Weekly format, so we recommend Topics or Collapsed Topics for the vast majority of modules.

Curriculum map format

This is only used in certain Schools by arrangement: it displays sessions with associated learning outcomes set in the Curriculum Mapping System.

Single activity format (rarely used)

When this format is used the module only has 1 section. This allows one activity only to be added to the module. When the single activity format is selected, a drop down menu appears to allow the activity to be chosen.

Social format (rarely used)

This format is oriented around one main forum visible on the main module page i.e. all discussion topics are visible on the main module page. There are no other resources or activities in the module. This is suitable for non-modules where there is no content, but it is based around discussion - a bit like a social networking site.

Similar tutorials

The following other resources are also relevant to this topic:

- Module settings explained
- How to edit module settings
- How to edit the title of a section (topic or week)