Getting Started with Moodle

Moodle is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for the University of Kent. Your teachers will use Moodle to provide course materials such as handouts, lecture notes and PowerPoint presentations. Your teachers may also use Moodle in more interactive ways, which will require your input. Activities such as discussion forums, chat rooms, quizzes and assignment drop-boxes are often used. You may also be asked to use more advanced tools such as wikis or databases; your teachers will explain how to use these.

This document will demonstrate the look and feel of Moodle and describe some of the features.

Logging in

To access Moodle you need to open a web browser like Internet Explorer, Chrome or Firefox.

1. In the address line of your browser, type the address http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/ (note: no www!), then click the Go button or hit Enter. You will be directed to the Moodle login page.

This page provides useful information such as user guides videos for teachers and students. Site News posts, containing important announcements for all users, are displayed in the centre of this page.

2. Click on the Login button in the top-right corner of this page. You will be taken to the Kent IT Account Logon page or, if you are already logged in to another system (e.g. SDS) you can skip step 3.

3. Enter your usual Kent username (e.g. abc1) and password, then click the Login button.

You will now see the Moodle front page. Before we go any further let’s cover some of the essentials.

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Profile Bar – This drop-down menu, accessible from every page by clicking the arrow next to your name (right), provides useful links, along with the logout button.

Bread-crumb – You will find a “bread-crum” trail on every page other than the front page. Bread-crumbs are displayed in the top-left corner below the blue links bar. These indicate how you navigated to the current page and enable you to retrace your path back to your module page (Induction) or the front page (Home):

Help Icons – In several places within Moodle you will see help icons like this 🤔. Clicking this icon will open a new window displaying information about the related item.

Helpdesk Link – In the footer of every page you’ll find a link to contact the IS Helpdesk. Clicking the link opens your email client and creates a new email addressed to the helpdesk. Please use this only for technical queries; if you’re having problems finding specific resources within a module please contact the lecturer or convenor instead.

Front Page

The Moodle front page, pictured overleaf, is the first thing you’ll see every time you log in to Moodle, and contains profile information, a list of all your modules and some useful tools, called Blocks.
Blocks

Each of the tools on the left of the page is known as a Block. You may find different blocks in each of your modules, but you will always see these on the front page:

Calendar (1)

The calendar contains events for your modules or for groups within modules, which may be related to upcoming activities or deadlines. Certain activities such as assignments automatically create calendar entries. You can move between months using the arrows, or see a larger and more detailed calendar by clicking on the month name.
Main Menu (2)
This block contains useful links and training resources.

Messages (3)
The messages block shows any new messages you have received. To view a message, click the envelope icon next to the sender’s name. This will open up a chat window, much like in MSN or other instant messaging services, allowing you to read and reply to the message. If a message is sent to you when you aren’t logged in to Moodle then the message will be sent as an email to your Kent email account.

For more options, click the messages... link. A popup window will appear, giving options to add contacts and search for other Moodle users. To manage your messaging settings, click the Messaging link in the My profile settings section of the Settings block.

Settings (4)
This block appears on every page and contains settings relevant to the current page. It also contains your profile settings.

Navigation (5)
This block appears on every page and contains links to the homepage, News & Support, a list of your modules and an expanding menu of categories in Moodle, to allow you to browse available modules. It also contains other relevant links depending on the page you’re on.

Block options
Blocks have two display options. These are personal preferences for you:

- **Hide** – Collapses the block so that the content is no longer visible. Click the same icon again to display the content.

- **Dock** – This removes the block from the main page and ‘docks’ it to the side of the screen (right). Only the title will be visible, and hovering over the title displays the content. Clicking the same icon puts it back. Docking is useful if you use a tablet or netbook, as it gives more space on the screen for the main content.

My Modules (7)
All your modules are shown in the My Modules list. Each module should have a module code, a title and a short description, taken from the module handbook. For more information on each module click the more link at the end of the description. It should also show the campus and delivery dates of the module, as well as the name of the person teaching the module in Moodle. A module with a grey title means that you are enrolled but the module has not yet been made available to students. To enter a module, click on its title.

At the bottom of this list you’ll find a link to the Moodle Archive (8), which contains all modules which ran prior to 2012/13. You can go directly to the Moodle Archive by visiting [http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/archive](http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/archive).

Profile
The profile contains information about you, and everyone in Moodle has one. Other users on Moodle can see your profile if they click on your name, and it will display your description and photo. You can view your profile by clicking on your name anywhere you see it in Moodle; you’ll always find it in the top-right corner of every page (6). To personalise your profile, click on the Edit Profile link under My profile settings in the Settings block. To personalise your profile:

1. Add a description
2. Add a photo
You can add your own image by clicking the **Choose a file** button in the **New Picture** field. The file picker will appear, allowing you to upload an image from your computer or various other locations. If you use [Gravatar.com](http://Gravatar.com) your image will be displayed automatically. This image will appear next to your name in forums, messages, etc.

You can provide optional information about yourself including interests and additional contact information. You can also change **privacy** and forum subscription settings in this page. When you have finished editing your profile, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the **Update Profile** button to save your changes.

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**Modules**

Each module (example shown overleaf) consists of several content sections and blocks. Your teacher decides which optional blocks will appear, but there are several standard blocks in each module:

**Calendar** *(1)*

This is the same as on the front page but with module-level events only for the current module.

**Activities** *(2)*

This block sorts all content in the module by activity type, which may help you to find a specific resource.

**Settings** *(3)*

This provides a link to your profile. Depending on the settings your teacher has chosen you may also see a link to your Grades. This is not linked to SDS and only shows you grades given in or calculated by Moodle.

**Navigation** *(4)*

Within a module the navigation block will display a link to the participant list, which shows all users on the module, including teachers and students.

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**Module content**

The layout and content of each module is decided by the teacher. Some modules may have little descriptive information and others may have full explanations throughout the module. Content is arranged into sections *(5)*. Each section has a descriptive area at the top *(6)* and a content area below *(7)*, separated by a dotted line. The content area can contain different types of content:

- Files, such as Word documents, PowerPoint presentations and PDFs
- Web links
- Forums and Chat rooms
- Assignments and Quizzes

Click on the name of the item to open it. Some documents will require you to have particular software installed on your computer, such as Flash player, Adobe Reader or Windows Media Player. Most computers already have these installed so this shouldn’t be a problem. More advanced types of content may also be used. Your teacher will tell you how to use these.

Some sections may be hidden from students while the teachers make changes and, depending on the module’s settings, these will either be completely invisible or displayed as “not available”. One section may be marked as current or important, and this will have green bars left and right to highlight the section.
Logging Out

You have two alternatives for logging out of Moodle:

1. Click on the **Logout** link in the bottom-right corner of any page.
2. Click on the arrow next to your name in the top right hand corner of any page (8) to display the profile bar. Click on the **Logout** icon.
Help & Support

For general help using Moodle, contact your teacher. If you are having problems accessing Moodle or a specific module, contact the Helpdesk on 01227 82 4888, or email helpdesk@kent.ac.uk. Other training documents are available from the elearning website [http://www.kent.ac.uk/elearning/documentation.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/elearning/documentation.html).

Don’t forget that the Moodle Induction Module and Student Orientation Video are available from the Main Menu block on the front page, and can solve many of your Moodle-related problems.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I access Moodle from home?
Yes, all you need is a web browser and access to the Internet. You log in using the address [http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/](http://moodle.kent.ac.uk/) and enter your Kent user name and password as usual.

My password isn’t working!
Make sure you do not have CAPS lock selected and that you enter your user name in lowercase. If you still have problems, click the Help me log in button.

I have missed my assignment deadline. What should I do?
Contact your teacher for advice.

I don’t have any modules in my list. Why is this?
This means that you are not yet enrolled on any modules (in Moodle). Once you are enrolled on your modules the module list will appear.

I can see the “My Modules” list but one of my modules is missing. What should I do?
It may be that you are not yet enrolled on the module in the Student Data System (SDS). Log in to SDS to check whether you are enrolled on the module. If you aren’t enrolled then ask your teacher to enrol you. If you have only just enrolled in the module then wait 24hrs and try again.

One of my modules is greyed out and I can’t access it. Why not?
The module has not yet been made available by the lecturer or convenor; it’s possible that they have decided not to use Moodle for this module. When it is made available it will no longer be greyed out and you can access the module. Please contact the lecturer or convenor directly if you think you should have access.