Moodle: Interactive

This training document is designed for teachers who are experienced in using Moodle and want to try some more advanced features, such as interactive activities and selective release of content.

This document assumes a certain level of proficiency in Moodle, so you should at least have attended a Moodle Essentials training session or read the Moodle: Essentials training guide, and ideally have experience of uploading files, creating web links and editing section summaries in Moodle.

Managing students

For most tasks in Moodle, you will not need to consider student management, as students and seminar groups are automatically synchronised with SDS by Moodle’s automation system, Connect. However, it can also be useful to manually create groups and groupings as this gives you more options when dealing with activities. This section deals with user management in general.

Manual enrolment

For instructions on how to manually enrol other users on to your modules, please see the Moodle: Essentials training guide.

Self-enrolment

If you would like to allow a large number of people access to a module, enabling self-enrolment will save time over manually enrolling them. Open self-enrolment will allow all Moodle users full access to your module, but access can be controlled further by adding an enrolment key (password).

To enable self-enrolment in your module:

1. In the appropriate module, choose “Participants” in the left-hand hamburger menu, then choose “Enrolment methods” from the context menu (cog icon).
2. The resulting page will display all the enrolment methods used in the module. Do not delete or disable either the “Manual Enrolment” or “Category Sync” methods as this will remove your access to the module. The “Self-Enrolment” method will be available but currently disabled (see Figure 1), so click the eye icon 🔄 to enable it.

From this point, anyone with access to Moodle (all staff and students at Kent) will be able to enrol on, and participate in, your module. If you would like more control over who can enrol on your module then you need to edit the settings of this enrolment method:

1. Click on the edit icon 🔧 in the self-enrolment settings as shown in Figure 1.
2. The resulting page gives you control over the following options:
   - *Enrolment Key* – A password which is required at the point of self-enrolment.

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**Figure 1 - Setting up module self-enrolment**
• **Use Group Enrolment Keys** – An advanced option which automatically enrolls users into a particular group in the module when a particular enrolment key is used (to use this you must first set up a self-enrolment method without group enrolment, then add a separate self-enrolment method for each group).

• **Default Assigned Role** – The role to assign the user (usually Student).

• **Enrolment Duration** – Automatically unenrolls users after a number of days.

• **Start & End Date** – Enables you to set a time period in which users can self-enrol.

• **Max Enrolled Users** – A limit to the number of users who can enrol.

• **Custom welcome Message** – A message to be sent via email to the user once they have enrolled.

3. Make your changes then scroll to the bottom of the screen and click the “Save changes” button.

You can run multiple instances of self-enrolment at the same time, with any number of variations in the options above. To do this, select “self-enrolment” from the “Add method” menu at the bottom of the Enrolment Methods page (see Figure 2).

All of these options require the prospective guest/student to know where to find your module. They can search for the module using the search box at the top of the My Modules list on the Moodle front-page. However, if you wish certain groups of people to access your module then it is best to send them an email with the direct link to your module and, if applicable, the enrolment key.

**Note**: manually enrolled, or self-enrolled, students and guests cannot access CLA-scanned book or journal extracts due to licensing restrictions.

### Groups and groupings

Groups can be used to manage the students in your module, and will enable you to split activities and control access to individual resources. Moodle will automatically create seminar and delivery groups using information in SDS. However, you may wish to create your own groups of students. This is easy to do.

1. In the appropriate module, click “Participants” from the left-hand hamburger menu then Groups from the context menu on the right of the screen.

The Groups page has three tabs:

• **Groups** – in which you can create and assign groups.

• **Groupings** – in which you can create groupings to contain and categorise groups.

• **Overview** – which shows all groups and groupings with member details.

You can create groups in two ways, manually or automatically. If you want to specify the members of each group then you will need to do this manually. If, however, you just want to split all your students into a number of groups – for example, to create small groups for a particular Moodle activity – then you can do this automatically.

#### Manually creating groups

1. In the “Groups” tab, click the “Create Group” button.

2. Give the group a name, such as ‘Team 1’. There are other options on this page but they are largely unnecessary, though you may wish to add an enrolment key if you are using the advanced options in self-enrolment (see page 1).

3. Click the “Save changes” button.
4. You will see your new group listed, but you will need to add members. Select the group and click the “Add/remove users” button.

The next page will show all members of the module in a list of “Potential Members”. You may have many students, so you will need to scroll down the list to find the right ones. Alternatively, you can search for a student.

5. Select a user – to add more than one at a time hold down the control (Ctrl) key as you click each name – and click the “Add” button.

6. When you have finished click the “Back to groups” button.

Automatically creating groups

1. In the “Groups” tab, click the “Auto-create groups” button. The resulting form has several options:
   - Naming scheme – enables you to name all the groups in one step, using placeholders. ‘@’ is a placeholder for letters, whereas ‘#’ is a placeholder for numbers, so if you would like to name your groups Presentation group A, B, etc. you would enter ‘Presentation group @’.
   - Auto create based on – to specify whether you wish to control the number of groups or the number of members per group.
   - Group/member count – enter the number of groups or members per groups required.
   - Select members with role – enables you to filter out teachers. You would usually select “Student”.
   - Select members from cohort – you can leave this set to ‘any’.
   - Select members from group – enables you to select an existing group from the drop-down box.
   - Allocate members – you can allocate members randomly or alphabetically by first or last name.
   - Alternatively you can create a new grouping for these auto-created groups (recommended – more information on Groupings below), e.g. ‘Presentation groups’.

2. Click the “Preview” button if you would like to check the allocations before proceeding, or the “Submit” button to create the groups.

Creating groupings

A grouping is a collection or grouping of groups. Groupings enable you to collate a series of groups together so that, for instance, you could generate a grouping of Teams 1, 2 and 3 and a grouping of Teams 4, 5 and 6. In addition, a single group can be added to any number of groupings. To create a grouping manually:

1. On the Groups page, click the “Groupings” tab and click the “Create Grouping” button.
2. Type the name of the grouping, e.g. “Presentation Groups”. You can also give a description if you wish, as a reminder of the purpose of the grouping.
3. Click “Save” and you will see your new grouping listed.
4. To add groups to your grouping, select the “Show groups in grouping” icon 🏛. You can then add groups in the same way that you add students to groups.
Using group with resources

You can limit access to a particular resource using groups. Create the resource in the usual way, then:

1. With editing turned on, choose Edit >> Edit settings next to the relevant resource.
2. Scroll down and click on the section entitled Restrict Access.
3. Click add restriction. A pop-up box will appear on-screen listing a range of ways to restrict access to the resource.
4. Choose group from the list.
5. A new restriction will appear on-screen. Choose a group from the drop-down menu in order to restrict access solely to members of this group.

   **Note:** When the ‘eye’ icon is ‘open’, the resource will be greyed-out in the module for students who are not members of the group. Changing the ‘eye’ icon to ‘closed’ will hide the resource link entirely, except from members of the selected group.

7. Choose “Save and return to module” at the bottom of the screen.

You will now see that the resource has the name of the group next to it in brackets (see Figure 3). This is to remind you that it is only available to that group.

Using groups with activities

Due to the interactive aspect of Moodle activities, they have more group-related options than resources. Most activity types allow you to enable group mode in their settings. There are two modes:

- **Separate Groups** – Members can only see and interact with other members of their own group.
- **Visible groups** – Members of groups may only interact with other members of their own group, but can see the activity of other groups.

To enable group mode on an activity whilst you are creating it, choose a “group mode” from the drop-down list in the “Common module settings” section at the bottom of the page. To choose a group mode for an existing activity, click the “groups” icon next to the activity in editing mode on the main module page. This will toggle between “no groups”, “separate groups” and “visible groups”.

It is a good idea to set a particular grouping to split the activity by, otherwise a student will see any groups they are members of rather than, for example, their seminar group. To do this:

1. With editing turned on, choose Edit >> Edit settings next to the relevant activity.
2. Scroll down to the “Common module settings” section and click the heading to show options. Choose a group mode and then select the relevant grouping (e.g. Seminar Groups) from the “Grouping” drop-down list.
3. (Optional – only if you want to restrict access) Click Add group/grouping access restriction.
4. (If following optional steps) Click on the Restrict Access heading, below.
5. (If following optional steps) Click the eye icon next to the grouping. This does not hide the activity totally, but hides it from students who do not have access to it, while anyone in the presentation groups will see the activity as normal.
6. Click the “Save and return to module” button.

If you decide to use group mode for an activity, please make this clear to the students in the description of the activity, so that they know what to expect.

Restricting access

In addition to grouping-based restriction, resources and activities in a module can also be restricted by other means. Below the “Common module settings” section of the resource’s “Settings” page you will find the “Restrict Access” section (see Figure 5), which enables you to set:

- **Date** – You can choose to enable access from a particular date and time to another. You can therefore arrange, for example, for a document to become available to students only after an assignment deadline has passed. Please note that this is separate to open/close dates for assessment activities, which will have separate settings for deadlines.

- **Grade** – Each student will only have access to the resource/activity if they have an appropriate mark in another Moodle-based activity. For instance, you could create a more difficult quiz only accessible to those students who scored highly on a previous quiz, and additional support documentation for students who scored poorly.

In addition, you can choose whether the resource is hidden completely from students without access or to show that the item exists and to make clear why they cannot access it (to perhaps encourage them to meet the requirements).

Forum and Forum+

A forum is a message board, which you can use to facilitate discussions on various topics. Some teachers use forums to supplement or replace seminar discussions, whilst others may just provide a forum as a way for students to interact with each other, so the amount of involvement you have in your forums is up to you.

A module can contain any number of forums, and you may already have one forum in your module, the ‘Announcements Forum’ (see Moodle: Essentials training guide for information). This forum is designed for staff to broadcast information to students, so students are unable to post or reply to messages. Regular forums are different.

Note: Forum+ provides the ability to make forum postings anonymous to encourage participation from all members of the cohort in addition to all of the functionality provided by the original forum activity.

Before you create your first forum, there are a few things you need to know:

Types of forum

There are several types of forum available for you to use, and each type is suited to particular uses:

- **Standard forum for general use** – This default option allows any number of discussion topics. This can result in lots of varied discussion and so is best suited to a student-led forum.

- **Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format** – As above but with a slightly different layout.

- **A single simple discussion** – one threaded discussion. Useful if you want to create a separate forum for each topic/question. The description that you enter when creating the forum becomes the first
post in the discussion, and students reply to your post, or each other’s replies. Once created, this can be duplicated as often as required through your module.

- **Each person posts one discussion** – Enables each student to start only one discussion, though they can reply to others.
- **Q&A Forum** – The same as option 3, but students must post their own reply before they are able to view others’.
Forum subscriptions

Moodle can send email updates about forum activity. If you do not change any settings in your profile then the first time you post a message in a forum you will be subscribed automatically, and will receive an email every time someone posts a message in that discussion. This can be useful, but if you have a number of forums or a large number of students using a forum then it may become unmanageable. To avoid this situation:

1. Choose your name at the top right, then Preferences.
2. Choose Forum preferences.
3. Change the “Forum auto-subscribe” setting to “No: don’t automatically subscribe me to forums”.
4. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Save changes”.

You now still have the option of subscribing to forums, but it will not happen automatically.

Creating a forum

1. With editing on, select “Forum” from the “Add an activity...” menu in the relevant section.
2. Provide a “Forum name” (required).
3. Use the description field to provide an introduction. In most cases this will be a description of the purpose of the forum, but for the ‘single simple discussion’ and ‘Q&A’ forum types this is where you provide the initial question for the students to answer.
4. Choose a “Forum Type”.
5. Choose any other optional settings (remember that you can find help information by clicking 🕵️).
6. If required, set group and grouping options (see pages 3 and 4).
7. At the bottom of the page, click the “Save and display” button to enter the forum.

Subscription options

In the previous section we disabled our own automatic subscription to forums, but as the teacher you can choose how subscription works in each forum:

- **Optional** – Allows each user to decide whether to subscribe to the forum.
- **Forced** – Subscribes all users to the forum, and does not allow them to unsubscribe (this is the default setting for the Announcements forum).
- **Auto** – Subscribes all users to the forum, but allows them to unsubscribe (**recommended**).
- **Disabled** – Does not allow subscriptions at all.

This option can be found when editing the forum’s settings, or when viewing the forum, by clicking the context menu (⚙️ - ) and choosing the relevant subscription mode from the dropdown menu. As a teacher you can also manually subscribe (or unsubscribe) any user on the module to the forum, using the “Show/edit current subscribers” link, further down the context menu. **Note:** you will need to turn editing on in the resulting page to manage subscribers.

Viewing forums

You can access forums from a link within a section. Original forum activities have this icon: 📣 while the new Forum+ activities that enable anonymous posting display with the following icon: 📣.
Reading posts

1. To open a forum, click on its title. You are then shown a list of that forum’s discussion threads. The initial message of a thread is shown, then how many messages (replies) are within that thread, along with the information on the most recent message (date and author name). If Groups mode has been enabled for the forum then the relevant group is also listed, and you can choose which group to interact with using the drop-down menu.

2. Click on the name of the discussion you want to view.

You will then see a list of all messages in that discussion thread. The amount of indent identifies each post’s position in the discussion.

Posting and replying

Posting or replying to a message is much like composing an email. You can post a new message by clicking the “Add a new topic” button on the forum’s start page. This may not be available, depending upon the forum type (page 5). In most cases, you will be replying to an existing message.

1. Click “Reply” to the right of the thread – a box will appear into which users can type and submit their replies.

2. Should users wish to Add/Edit Subject line if appropriate they would need to click the “Advanced” link on the right.

3. In the resulting window type in the content of your message (as shown in Figure 8).

4. Select whether you want to be subscribed to the forum. This will default to your profile setting (page 7).

5. If required, attach a file.

6. Staff have the extra option to set a “Display period” for the message. If set, students will only be able to see the message during this period.

7. Click the “Post to Forum” button.

8. After posting your message you are given a 30-minute window of time to edit or delete your post (this can be removed by ticking the box shown). You will see that the links to edit or delete your post are at the bottom (see Figure 9). After this time the post cannot be changed. This is to ensure the thread continues to make sense to new readers.

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Figure 8 - Posting a reply in a forum

Figure 9 - Links to edit/delete posts appear within a 30-minute window after posting in case users change their mind
Using forums with groups

All forum types enable all students within the module to post messages and reply to each other. If you would like to split the forum between groups, follow the instructions on page 4. In group mode, a drop-down list appears in the top-left corner of the main forum page, and the teacher can start a topic for a particular group, or for all participants.

Student perspective

- In a topic for all participants, everyone can reply to everyone else.
- In a topic for a particular group, only the members of the group can reply.
- If visible groups is chosen, students also see the drop-down list and can select which group to view, but they can only respond to or create new topics for their own group.
- If separate groups is chosen, students do not see the drop-down list and so cannot see the activity of other groups.

Choice

A choice activity, as the name implies, enables students to make a choice. As the teacher, you decide on the items they can choose from. Examples:

- Enabling students to vote between destinations for a field trip.
- Enabling students to book presentation or tutorial slots.

To create a Choice activity:

1. With editing on, select “Choice” from the “Add an activity...” menu in the relevant section.
2. Provide a name and description (e.g. the question you are asking) for the choice.
3. Allow choice to be updated – recommended if you limit the number of responses. This is best used in conjunction with a time restriction.
4. Decide whether to “limit the number of responses allowed”. This is necessary for any choices where only a particular number of students can select each option, such as tutorial slots.
5. Type each of the different items into an “Option” field, and specify the number of responses allowed (if applicable).
6. You can add extra fields (options) to the form by clicking the “Add 3 fields to form” button below the options. Any options left empty are ignored.
7. You can restrict answers to a particular time period using the availability options.
8. The Results settings enable you to tailor what students see:
   - Publish results – Whether the students can see a summary of the responses.
   - Privacy of results – Whether to display student names or anonymous information only.
   - Show column for unanswered – Lets you know who has and has not made a choice yet.
9. Set a group mode or access restrictions (page 4) as required in Common Module Settings.
10. At the bottom of the page, click the “Save and display” button to enter the activity.
Group choice

The group choice activity works the same as the Choice activity, but each option is a pre-existing group, so this is a digital version of a group “sign-up” sheet. To create a Group Choice:

1. With editing on, select “Group choice” from the “Add an activity...” menu in the relevant section.
2. Follow steps 2-6 for the Choice activity above, selecting an existing group from the drop-down menu for each option. Any limits you set should at least equal the number of students on the module when added together.
3. At the bottom of the page, click the “Save and display” button to enter the activity.

When students visit this activity they will see the available groups, as well as any existing members. When they choose a group they will be automatically added, and therefore ready to participate in any activities where you have enabled a group mode.

Feedback

The Feedback activity enables you to create a survey for your students to complete. This can be used to evaluate a particular activity or experience, to gauge students’ opinion on a subject, or to gather information for research. Results are collated and analysed for you and can be displayed as individual responses or downloaded as a spreadsheet.

Creating a Feedback activity

1. With editing turned on, select “Feedback” from the “Add an activity...” menu in the relevant section.
2. Provide a name and description for your feedback activity. The description will appear when students click on the activity, so this should be used to introduce the survey.
3. If required, set “Open” and “Close” dates under Availability. To enable these tick the check boxes first.
4. In the Question and submission settings, select from the following options:
   - Record user names – whether responses should be anonymous.
   - Allow multiple submissions – whether students can respond more than once.
   - Enable notification of submissions – whether teachers receive notifications when a submission happens.

Note use with caution: anyone with editing access to the module will receive this email, which may include all School administrators

- Automated numbers – whether questions are numbered.
- Show analysis page after submit – whether students see summarised results after responding.

5. After submission. Choosing Yes to Show analysis page gives students summarised results after they respond. You can provide some information to students after they have responded by editing the Completion message box (recommended), or direct them to a particular web page by typing/pasting the link into the “Link to next activity” field (leaving this blank will add a ‘continue’ button, linking back to the course home page.
6. Use Common module settings to set a group mode, which in this case enables you to analyse the total responses per group, or access restrictions (page 4) as required.
7. At the bottom of the page, click the “Save and display” button to enter the activity.
Adding questions

1. Go to your Feedback activity and click on the “Edit Questions” tab (as shown in Figure 10).

2. Select a question type from the drop-down menu.

3. Each question type has different settings, but some are common:
   - **Required** – If ticked, the student will not be allowed to submit their response without completing this question.
   - **Question** – The question text the students will see.
   - **Label** – Used to help you identify the question when viewing results. Not visible to students.
   - **Position** – This question’s position in the list of questions.

4. When you have finished editing your question, click the “Save question” button.

Your question now appears in the list of questions, and can be moved to a particular point in the list, edited, made compulsory or deleted by choosing edit and the relevant option. If you have not set open and close dates for your questionnaire and have instead chosen to hide it, do not forget to unhide it so that students can respond. To unhide, choose **Edit >> Show** next to the activity on the main module page.

Responses

To view the summary of responses to your survey, click the “Analysis” tab. This tab initially shows summarised information about all responses (which can be limited to a particular group if a group mode was enabled in the settings), including useful charts, totals and averages.

The “Show Responses” tab lists each individual response, along with the user details if non-anonymous, and enables you to view/delete individual responses and download them all.

For full details of the question types and options, please see [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Building_Feedback](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Building_Feedback)
Glossary

**Activity** .......... An interactive element which requires input from students, such as forums and assignments.

**Availability** .......... Whether or not students can access the module.

**Block** ............... Boxes at the side or bottom of the page containing useful links and tools.

**Breadcrumbs** ........ A trail of links to take you back to previously visited pages.

**Connect** ............. Kent’s automation system which uses information gathered from other systems such as SDS, OTIS and the Online Module Catalogue to create modules and enrol students and staff automatically.

**Delivery** ............. A single instance of a module being taught, e.g. HI308, Canterbury Campus, Weeks 1-13.

**Group** ............... A group of users within a module, used to split activities.

**Grouping** ............ A group of groups, used to control access to resources or activities.

**Guest** ............... A role which provides read-only access to a module.

**Module** .............. A web page in Moodle representing a taught module.

**Resource** ............ A read-only piece of content, such as a Word document or PDF.

**Section** .............. A box within your module in which you can create resources and activities for your students, and provide a summary to describe the content. Sometimes also known as Topics or Weeks, depending on the course format used.

Help and support

For general help using Moodle, contact your Faculty Learning Technologist (FLT). If you are having problems accessing Moodle, contact the Helpdesk on 01227 82 4888, or email helpdesk@kent.ac.uk. Other training guides are available on the E-Learning website.