

10: GROUPS & GROUPINGS

WELCOME TO THE MOODLE GROUPS & GROUPINGS TUTORIAL!

In this tutorial, you will learn how to use Groups and Groupings to organize your course and activities.

If you have not used one of CareerTech’s “How to Moodle” tutorials before, view the [instructions](#) for using it as a self-paced tutorial or as a resource for classroom instruction.

Before taking this tutorial, you should be familiar with:

- Setting up a course in Moodle
- Adding an activity to a topic in your course
- Grading assignments and using the Gradebook

You will need student user accounts if using this tutorial for a training exercise. Check to see if your server admin has set up test user accounts.

NOTE: The Enrollment Methods tutorial includes information about setting up enrollment so that students are automatically assigned to a group when they enroll in a course.

To begin, select from the menu below or simply turn to the next page.

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INTRODUCTION

Group work is a standard classroom practice. Moodle allows you to extend this practice to the online space with its Groups functionality. You can set up groups to have students collaborate with each other, to assign portions of an activity, or as a grading or administrative tool.

It is important to understand the difference between “groups” and “groupings” as used in Moodle:

- **Groups** refers to a collection of one or more individual members. Members are usually students, but you can also assign teachers or assistants to be part of a group.
- **Groupings** are containers for groups. You cannot assign an individual to a Grouping—the individual must first be part of a Group, which is then assigned to the Grouping.

Groups

In Moodle, groups are defined by the instructor (or automatically by Moodle, if desired) and students are assigned to the defined groups. This definition allows students to communicate and collaborate within their groups when working online rather than with the entire class. It also allows you to assign a single grade to a group submission, rather than assigning the same grade to each student that belonged to the group.

For example, perhaps you want your class of 20 students to work in groups of four. Each group is to create a video on a topic assigned to that group. As the teacher, you would set up the single assignment “Create a Video” in Moodle. Your set up of the activity would include the use of defined groups, rather than individual students. With this set up, each group of students is now able to access the activity and see their own group’s assignment. They will also submit the assignment as a group. You can use the same groups when setting up a wiki, which would allow each group to collaborate within the wiki without seeing what other groups were doing.

Groupings

In Moodle, the term “grouping” refers to a collection of groups. As with groups, you create a grouping in Moodle and then assign groups to the grouping. Groupings can be useful when you want to use different groups for different activities in your class. For example, if you have students work in pairs for one assignment and in groups of five or six for another assignment, you can create each of the desired groups and then create groupings out of the groups. In this way, your activity set up can use whichever set of groups you need. Groupings can also be used to restrict access to an item, such as an extra credit activity or quiz, to a subset of students.

Groups and Groupings

While groups and groupings may be used in many ways, the general process for working with groups includes the following:

1. The instructor creates the desired groups at the course level.
2. The instructor defines settings for an activity so that groups are enabled.
3. Students participate in the activity and submit work as part of their assigned group.
4. The instructor evaluates group work and assigns a grade, which is replicated to each student in the group.

CREATING GROUPS

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION:

Watch this 2-minute video to see a demonstration of creating a group.

http://youtu.be/MhtlLY_3Ce0

NOTE: Video demonstrations were not created by Oklahoma CareerTech, and they may use a different version of Moodle. However, the steps are the same as the ones that you will use.

Use the following steps to create a group:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	From your course site, click on Course Management . Then, under Course Settings, select Course administration .	This takes you to the Course administration page.
2.	From the Course administration page, click on the Users tab. Then click the Groups link.	The Groups page will display.
3.	Click the Create Group button.	The Create Group page displays. Although there are several fields that can be used to define the group, the only required field is Group Name.
4.	Enter a name for the group.	The name of the group should be descriptive enough to help you know how this group is used.

Groups and Groupings

Step	Action	Notes
5.	Enter a Group ID number if desired.	This field can be left blank. It is only used when matching the group against external systems and is not displayed anywhere on the site.
6.	Enter a Group Description, if desired.	This displays on the course page.
7.	Enter an Enrollment key, if desired.	<p>An enrollment key enables access to the course to be restricted to only those who know the key. If a group enrollment key is specified, then not only will entering that key let the user into the course, but it will also automatically make them a member of this group.</p> <p>The text in this field is hidden by default. To view the field text, click the Unmask box.</p>
8.	Add a picture to display for this group, if desired.	Add an image in JPG or PNG format. The image will be cropped to a square and resized to 100x100 pixels. When a group member makes a contribution to an activity, the group picture appears as an icon next to the student's individual picture. The picture replaces the group name.
9.	Click Save Changes .	The display returns to the Groups page. The new group displays in the "Groups" column as [name] (0). This indicates that there are no members yet assigned to the group.
10.	With the group selected, click the Add/Remove users button.	<p>The Add/remove users: [groupname] page displays. The list on the right contains all users that may be assigned to the group.</p> <p>Select any user to see groups that the user already belongs to.</p>
11.	Select users to be assigned to the group.	You can add users one by one, or you can select multiple users to add them all at once.
12.	Click the Add button.	<p>The page refreshes to show the new members moved into the group list.</p> <p>To remove members from a group, simply select the user in the group and click Remove.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
13.	Click Back to Groups at the bottom of the page.	The display returns to the Groups page.

From the Groups page, you can also perform other actions with groups.

- **Edit group settings.** This button opens the settings page for the selected group. You can always add or edit the description, add a picture, and so forth.
- **Delete selected group.** This button deletes the selected group. You will be asked to confirm before the group is removed.
- **Auto-create groups.** This button allows you to specify the number of groups you want to create from the enrolled users, or the number of users you want per group. Moodle automatically creates the groups and assigns the members based on your specifications.
- **Import groups.** You can import groups from a CSV file using this button.
- **Groupings tab.** This tab allows you to create groupings, which is covered later in this tutorial.
- **Overview tab.** This tab provides a way to see all the groups and groupings you have created for the course.

USING GROUPS IN A COURSE

Group mode is a setting that determines how groups function within the course and at the activity level. There are three options:

- **No groups** – Groups are not enabled. There are no subgroups, everyone is part of one big community.
 - ✓ It is best not to use this setting at the Course level, because it will restrict your ability to make use of Groups. For example, this setting at the Course level would prevent you from using group filtering in your online gradebook.
- **Separate groups** – Each group member can only see work from students in their own group; the work of students in other groups is invisible.
- **Visible groups** – Each group member works in their own group, but can also see the work of students belonging to other groups.

Groups and Groupings

The Group mode can be set as a course-wide default. To set the Group mode at the course level, follow these steps:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	From your course site, click on Course Management . Then, under Course Settings, click Edit course settings	The Edit Course Settings page will display.
2.	Expand the Groups section and select the desired group mode from the drop-down list.	If you set the course level group mode to Visible Groups, students will be able to see group membership on the Participants page.
3.	Select the desired value for Forced .	If group mode is forced, then the course group mode is applied to every activity in the course. Group mode settings in each activity will be ignored.
4.	Select a value for Default Grouping .	If groupings are enabled, a default grouping for course activities and resources may be set.
5.	Click Save and Display .	The course page displays.

Using Groups for an Activity

The group mode setting for activities is found in the Common Module Settings of each activity set up page.

If groups are used with an activity, it is automatically set to use the group mode that was defined at the course level. However, as long as the mode is not forced at the Course level, you can still set the mode at the activity level as well.

For example, if you have a forum set up so that each of several small groups must respond to a unique discussion question, it would work as follows:

- **Separate groups** – Each student would see only their own group’s discussion question and only responses from the members of their own group, as though the forum belonged only to that group.
- **Visible groups** – Each student would see all discussion questions and responses from all other students regardless of group, but could reply only to the discussion question assigned to their own group.

Groups and Groupings

As a teacher, you can post to all groups or to individual groups in a forum. When you enter the forum, select “All participants” or the separate group to whom you want to post from the pull down menu in the top-left corner of the screen.

Submissions with Groups

Assignments can be set up so that each member of a group must submit, or so that one submission is made by any of the members on the group’s behalf. The teacher defines this in the Group Submission Settings section of the activity set up.

- **Students submit in groups** field – If enabled, the activity will use groups. Moodle will use the default set of groups unless a specific grouping is selected in the **Grouping for student groups** field below. A group submission will be shared among group members and all members of the group will see any changes to the submission.
- **Require all group members submit** field – This field is only active if students are required to click a Submit button for the activity. If enabled, all members of the student group must click the submit button for this assignment before the group submission will be considered as submitted. If disabled, the group submission will be considered as submitted as soon as any member of the student group clicks the submit button.
- **Grouping for student groups** field – You can use this drop-down field to select a grouping that contains the specific set of groups that you want to use with this activity. If not set, the default set of groups will be used.

Grading with Groups

To view grades for students in specific groups in the Grader report, select from the **Visible Groups** dropdown list at the top left of the report page.

When students work in groups on an assignment, you can give each individual student a grade or give one grade to the group, which is then replicated to each student.

- When grading the assignment, enter the activity to grade as usual by clicking **View all submissions**.
- Click the **Grade** icon for a single student in the group to open the grading page.
- At the bottom of the page in the Group Submission Settings section, select the desired action from the **Apply grades and feedback to entire group** field.
 - ✓ If you would like to assign a grade and feedback to each individual student, select No.
 - ✓ If you want to enter one grade and feedback per submission so that it will be applied to all students in the group, select Yes.

CREATE GROUPINGS

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION:

Watch this 10-minute video to see a demonstration of creating and working with groupings.

<https://youtu.be/N4uWE4d57IE>

NOTE: Video demonstrations were not created by Oklahoma CareerTech, and they may use a different version of Moodle. However, the steps are the same as the ones that you will use.

Groupings are a container for groups. They can be used to organize how students see and participate in your Moodle course. If you need to create an activity that is only visible to certain students (whether it is only one student, or an entire section), you can do so by creating a grouping. You can then set up the activity so that it is only visible to the desired grouping.

NOTE: You will need student accounts if using this tutorial for a training exercise. Check to see if your server admin has set up test user accounts.

To create a grouping, use the following steps:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	From your course site, click on Course Management . Then, under Course Settings, select Course administration .	This takes you to the Course administration page.
2.	From the Course administration page, click on the Users tab. Then click the Groups link.	The Groups page will display.
3.	Click the Groupings tab.	The Groupings page displays.
4.	Click the Create Grouping button.	The Create Grouping page displays. The only required field is Grouping Name.
5.	Enter a name for the grouping.	The name of the grouping should be descriptive enough to help you know how this grouping is used.

Groups and Groupings

Step	Action	Notes
6.	Enter a Grouping ID number if desired.	This field can be left blank. It is only used when matching the group against external systems and is not displayed anywhere on the site.
7.	Enter a Grouping Description, if desired.	This displays on the course page.
8.	Click Save Changes .	The display returns to the Groupings page. The new grouping displays in the table. Icons associated with the grouping allow you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit the grouping settings• Delete the grouping• Add groups to the grouping
9.	To add one or more groups to the grouping, click the Show groups in grouping icon.	The Add/remove groups: [groupingname] page displays. The list on the right contains all groups that may be assigned to the grouping.
10.	Select group(s) to be assigned to the grouping.	You can add groups one by one, or you can select multiple groups and add them all at once.
11.	Click the Add button.	The page refreshes to show the new groups moved into the grouping. To remove groups from a grouping, simply select and click Remove .
12.	Click Back to Groupings at the bottom of the page.	The display returns to the Groupings page.

When you first create a grouping, the grouping table will show “0” in the Activities column. This is because this grouping has not been assigned to any activities in your course yet.

To assign a grouping to an activity, use the following steps:

- From the settings page for the activity, in the **Common Module Settings** section, ensure that **Group Mode** is set to either Visible Groups or Separate Groups.
- In the **Grouping** field, select the grouping that you wish to assign the activity to.

Once you save changes, any student that is not a member of a group within that grouping will not see the activity on the course page.

Groups and Groupings

For example, you may have two students with a particular interest in a topic that you would like them to pursue, but which is not necessary for everyone in the class. You can do this by:

1. Create a group with these two students as members.
2. Create a grouping, and add the group with the two students to the grouping.
3. Now set up an activity, such as a Wiki, just for these two students on your course page.
 - In the Common Module Settings section of the activity set up, mark the group mode as “separate groups.”
 - Select the grouping you just created from the Grouping field.

Your two students now have an activity on their course page that only they can see.

PRACTICE

Explore the group and grouping functionality with the following exercises in your Moodle practice course or on your actual course site.

Set Group Mode at the Course Level

- Follow the steps outlined in this tutorial to set a default group mode for your course of “Visible Groups.”
- Do not force the group mode.

Create Groups

1. Create at least two groups from the enrolled users in your practice course.
 - You can create the groups using the automatic function, or you can use the steps outlined in this tutorial to create the groups and add members.

Use Groups When Setting Up a Forum

1. Add a Forum activity to your Practice Course.
 - Create it as a Standard Forum for General Use
 - Under **Common Module Settings**, select Separate Groups for the **Group Mode** field.
2. Add a unique discussion question for each of your groups.
3. Log in and post as a student from each of your groups. As you do so, notice that you cannot see the discussion questions for other groups.
4. Modify the forum settings to change the **Group Mode** to Visible Groups.
5. Log in as a student, and notice that you can see the discussion questions and posts from other groups, but can reply only to the posts for the discussion question assigned to your group.

Create a Grouping to Set Up an Activity Accessible Only by Certain Students

1. Create a new group with a single student member.
2. Create a grouping using the steps outlined in this tutorial.
 - Add the group with the single student member to the grouping.
3. Set up a new Quiz activity called Make-up Exam.
 - In the **Common Module Settings** section of the activity set up, select the **Group Mode** as “separate groups.”
 - Select the new grouping you just created from the **Grouping** field.
 - Save your quiz and add a couple of questions.
4. Notice that on your Course page, the activity Make-Up Exam shows that it belongs to the Grouping that you specified.
5. Log in as the student that is the single member of the group and grouping. Notice that you can access the activity called Make-Up Exam.
6. Log in as another student. Notice that the activity Make-Up Exam does not appear on your course page.

SUMMARY AND RESOURCES

This tutorial gave you information about using groups and groupings in Moodle.

To learn more about these topics, visit:

- <https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Groups>
- https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Groups_FAQ
- <https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Groupings>
- https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Groupings_FAQ

HOW TO USE THIS TUTORIAL:

This tutorial can be used as a self-paced lesson or as a lesson plan in a classroom setting.

- ***As a self-paced lesson.***

If this is a completely new skill for you, work through the tutorial from beginning to end. However, if you have some prior experience with the topic, use the menu hyperlinks on page one to jump to a topic that you want to learn.

Most topics include hyperlinks to video demonstrations. While the videos are useful, you don't have to watch them. All the information that you need is listed in the tutorial text and step instructions.

Use the exercises at the end of the tutorial to practice the skill. This will help to correct any misunderstandings or mistakes before you use the skill in your classroom.

- ***As a lesson-plan for a classroom.***

When teaching this skill in a classroom, use the tutorial for:

- ✓ **Motivation**—Use the tutorial introduction as a springboard for a deeper exploration of how instructors might use this functionality in their classrooms. Encourage discussion and contributions from your students.
- ✓ **Demonstration**—Once your learners understand the purpose and pedagogical value of the functionality, demonstrate the steps of the relevant tasks as listed in the tutorial, using your computer and an overhead projector.
- ✓ **Practice**—Use the tutorial example as a basis for student practice. Assist as necessary.
- ✓ **Reference**—Encourage learners to use the tutorial post-session as a reference when using the functionality.

Return to the tutorial [main menu](#).

We would appreciate feedback on this tutorial! Please contact the ctYOU.org general support staff listed under contacts on ctYOU.org.