

## 27: OU BLOG ACTIVITY

### WELCOME TO THE OU BLOG TUTORIAL!

In this tutorial, you will learn how to use Moodle's OU Blog activity. Keep in mind the OU Blog may not be available on all Moodle servers.

If you have not used one of CareerTech's Moodle training 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 have a Moodle user ID and a course site and be familiar with:

- Setting up a course in Moodle
- Adding an activity to a topic in your course

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

### MENU OF TUTORIAL TOPICS

- [Introduction](#)
- [Adding a New OU Blog](#)
- [Summary and Resources](#)

## INTRODUCTION

The OU Blog activity in Moodle allows you to:

- Provide user blogs and course blogs
- Provide full support for comments
- Control who has access to the blogs

The OU Blog activity in Moodle is a resource you can use instead of or in addition to Moodle's standard blog system. If you wish to use Moodle's standard blog system, you must first add the Blog menu block on your course page. On the other hand, the OU Blog activity can be added to any topic in your course, just like any other activity or resource.

It is important to keep in mind that there is no current way to transfer content from the standard blog system to the OU Blog.

Ultimately, if you wish to grade your students' blog entries you must use the OU Blog. There is no way to add the standard blog to the course gradebook. But, if you do not wish to grade student blogs, the OU Blog activity gives you the option to keep the activity out of the gradebook.

Some potential uses of the OU Blog include:

- Giving students an opportunity to introduce themselves
- Facilitating discussion over course topics between students

Depending on your preferences, instructors and students can have the ability to comment on each other's blog posts. Much like the forum activity, this function can be used for discussions. It might be best to keep these discussions short to prevent long threads forming, which could result in a scrolling nightmare.

A blog post, unlike the first post in a forum, can be lengthy. Usually, a question and short answers are posted in forums. Blogs, on the other hand, can be used to answer a question more in-depth. Whether you use a forum or a blog will most likely be determined by whether or not you want your students to partake in a lot of discussion.

## ADDING A NEW OU BLOG

To set up any activity in Moodle, you must first:

1. Go to your course page.
2. Turn editing on.
3. Locate the topic or week where you will add the activity.
4. Click “Add an activity or resource” under that topic or week. This displays the list of available activities and resources.

Now follow these steps to create an OU Blog in your Moodle course:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	Choose “OU Blog” from the Activity portion of the <b>Add an Activity</b> dropdown list and click the Add button.	The OU Blog settings page will display.
2.	<i>Section: General</i> <i>Field: Blog name</i> Enter a name for your blog.	The blog name should be concise but descriptive. This name will appear on the course page. The name is hyperlinked so users can click to open the blog.  For training purposes, use the name “My Blog.”
3.	<i>Section: General</i> <i>Field: Intro</i> You have the option to add an Introduction to your blog here.	For training purposes, leave this field blank.

Step	Action	Notes
4.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Allow comments (if chosen for post)</i></p>	<p>You can choose from the available options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes, from logged in users</b>—Allows comments from users who have access to the post.</li> <li>• <b>Yes, from everybody (even if not logged in)</b>—Allows comments from users and from the general public. You will receive emails to approve or reject comments from users who are not signed in.</li> <li>• <b>Comments not allowed</b>—prevents anyone from making a comment on this post.</li> </ul> <p>For training purposes, leave this field in the default state.</p>
5.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Individual blogs</i></p>	<p>You can choose from the available options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No (blog together or in groups)</b>—There are no individual blogs set, everyone is part of a bigger community (depending on ‘Group mode’ setting).</li> <li>• <b>Separate individual blogs</b> – Individual users can only post to and see their own blogs, unless they have permission (“viewindividual”) to view other individual blogs.</li> <li>• <b>Visible individual blogs</b> –Individual users can only post to their own blogs, but they can view other individual blog posts.</li> </ul> <p>For training purposes, select Visible individual blogs.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
6.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Maximum visibility</i></p> <p>This option exists on the whole blog as well as on individual posts. If the option is set on the whole blog, that becomes a maximum. For example, if the whole blog is set to the first level, you cannot change the level of an individual post at all.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This option is only available if <b>No (blog together or in groups)</b> is selected.</p>	<p>You can choose from the available options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Visible to participants on this course</b>—To view the post you must have been granted access to the blog, usually by being enrolled on the course that contains it.</li> <li>• <b>Visible to everyone who is logged in to the system</b>—Everyone who is logged in can view the post, even if they’re not enrolled on a specific course.</li> <li>• <b>Visible to anyone in the world</b> – Any internet user can see this post if you give them the blog’s address</li> </ul>
7.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Show intro when posting</i></p>	<p>Check this box to show the intro when posting to the blog.</p>
8.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Maximum attachment size</i></p>	<p>This setting specifies the largest size of image/file that can be used in a blog post. For training purposes, set the maximum attachment size to 10MB.</p>
9.	<p><i>Section: General</i></p> <p><i>Field: Maximum number of attachments</i></p>	<p>This setting specifies the maximum number of files that can be attached to a blog post.</p>
10.	<p><i>Section: Contribution time period</i></p> <p><i>Fields: Posting only allowed from/until</i></p> <p>If you check the “enable” box for either of these fields, you must also enter an appropriate date.</p>	<p>This set of fields, if enabled, will allow students to post for the blog only during the specified time period.</p> <p>If you do not want to restrict access according to a range of dates, leave the Enable checkboxes blank. The date fields will be inactive.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
11.	<p><i>Section: Contribution time period</i></p> <p><i>Fields: Commenting only allowed from/until</i></p> <p>If you check the “enable” box for either of these fields, you must also enter an appropriate date.</p>	<p>This set of fields, if enabled, will allow students to comment on the blog only during the specified time period.</p> <p>If you do not want to restrict access according to a range of dates, leave the Enable checkboxes blank. The date fields will be inactive.</p>
12.	<p><i>Section: Grade</i></p> <p><i>Field: Grading</i></p>	<p>If you select this option, a grade for this blog will be added to the course gradebook and calculated automatically. Leave this off for a non-assessed blog, or one you plan to assess manually.</p>
13.	<p><i>Section: Grade</i></p> <p><i>Field: Grade</i></p> <p>Select the desired grading scale from the dropdown list.</p>	<p>The default is a 100-point grading scale. You can determine any maximum number below 100 for the scale. You can also choose None.</p> <p>Additional standard scales are available in the dropdown list. Any custom scales that are created for the course will display in the list also.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This set of fields will be inactive unless you selected “Teacher grades students” in the <b>Grading</b> field.</p>
14.	<p><i>Section: Ratings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Roles with permission to rate</i></p> <p><b>Note:</b> This capability check is not available until the OU Blog activity is saved.</p>	<p>To submit ratings users require the moodle/rating:rate capability and any module specific capabilities. Users assigned the following roles should be able to rate items. The list of roles may be amended via the permissions link in the administration block.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
15.	<p><i>Section: Ratings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Aggregate type</i></p>	<p>The aggregate type defines how ratings are combined to form the final grade in the gradebook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Average of ratings</b>—The mean of all ratings</li> <li>• <b>Count of ratings</b>—The number of rated items becomes the final grade. Note that the total cannot exceed the maximum grade for the activity.</li> <li>• <b>Maximum</b>—The highest rating becomes the final grade</li> <li>• <b>Minimum</b>—The smallest rating becomes the final grade</li> <li>• <b>Sum</b>—All ratings are added together. Note that the total cannot exceed the maximum grade for the activity.</li> </ul> <p>If “No ratings” is selected, then the activity will not appear in the gradebook.</p>
16.	<p><i>Section: Ratings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Scale</i></p>	<p>Select the type of grading used for this activity. If “scale” is chosen, you can then choose the scale from the “scale” dropdown. If using “point” grading, you can then enter the maximum grade available for this activity.</p>
17.	<p><i>Section: Common module settings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Visible</i></p> <p>Choose to show or hide the blog on the course page.</p>	<p>Use the Hide setting to prevent the activity from appearing on the course page. You may change the setting at any time.</p>
18.	<p><i>Section: Common module settings</i></p> <p><i>Field: ID number</i></p> <p>Enter an ID number if desired.</p>	<p>Setting an ID number provides a way of identifying the activity for grade calculation purposes. If the activity is not included in any grade calculation then the ID number field may be left blank.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
19.	<p><i>Section: Common module settings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Group mode</i></p> <p>Choose the group mode desired for this blog.</p>	<p>This allows you to have students access the blog as groups rather than as individuals.</p> <p>There are 3 options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No groups</b>—There are no sub groups, everyone is part of one big community.</li> <li>• <b>Separate groups</b>—Each group member can only see their own group, others are invisible.</li> <li>• <b>Visible groups</b>—Each group member works in their own group, but can also see other groups.</li> </ul> <p>If the group mode is forced at course level, you will not be able to change the group mode at the activity level.</p> <p>For training purposes, select No groups.</p>
20.	<p><i>Section: Common module settings</i></p> <p><i>Field: Grouping</i></p> <p>Choose the grouping mode desired for this blog.</p>	<p>The default is None. For other options to appear in this field, you must first set up groups in the course administration area.</p> <p>A single grouping can include just one group or several groups.</p>
21.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Fields: Activity Completion</i></p> <p>If desired, select an activity from the dropdown list and the condition that must be met to allow access to the blog.</p>	<p>This type of restriction may be used in place of the grade condition fields.</p>
22.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Field: Date</i></p> <p>If enabled, you must also enter the appropriate dates that will restrict access to the blog.</p>	<p>This set of fields allows students to view and access the blog only during the specified time period.</p>



Step	Action	Notes
23.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Field: Grade</i></p> <p>If desired, select an activity from the dropdown list and an acceptable grade range which must be met to allow access to the blog.</p>	<p>These fields allow you to specify any grade conditions from other parts of the course that must be met prior to accessing the blog.</p> <p>You may set multiple grade conditions. If you do, access to the blog will only be allowed when ALL grade conditions that you specify here are met.</p>
24.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Field: Group</i></p> <p>Select a group criteria from the dropdown menu that must be met for the user to access the blog.</p>	<p>You can select a single group or any group.</p>
25.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Field: User Profile</i></p> <p>Select a field and a logical condition that must be met for the user to access the blog.</p>	<p>You can restrict access based on any field from a user's profile.</p>
26.	<p><i>Section: Restrict Access &gt; Access Restrictions &gt; Add Restriction</i></p> <p><i>Field: Restriction set</i></p> <p>This setting allows nested restrictions.</p>	<p>This is an advanced setting that allows for restrictions to be placed within a restriction.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
27.	<p><i>Section: Activity completion</i></p> <p><i>Field: Completion tracking</i></p> <p>Select the desired completion tracking status from the dropdown list.</p>	<p>The user will see a checkmark next to the activity name on the course page when the activity is complete, if tracked.</p> <p>Activity completion can be tracked manually by the student, automatically based on certain conditions, or not at all.</p> <p>Multiple conditions may be set if desired. If so, the activity will only be considered complete when ALL conditions are met.</p>
28.	<p><i>Section: Activity completion</i></p> <p><i>Field: Require View/Grade</i></p> <p>Click the appropriate boxes to enable if you are tracking completion with the system in any of these ways.</p>	<p>These are conditions that can be used if Completion Tracking is set as “Show activity completion when conditions are met.”</p> <p>You can check any, all, or none of these items. Based on the items checked, the blog will be marked complete only when the student views the blog, the blog is graded, or the blog is submitted.</p>
29.	<p><i>Section: Activity Completion</i></p> <p><i>Field: Expect completed on</i></p> <p>If you check the “enable” box for this field, you must also enter an appropriate date.</p>	<p>This field specifies the date when the activity is expected to be completed. The date is not shown to students and is only displayed in the activity completion report.</p>
30.	<p>Click <b>Save and Display</b>.</p>	

## SUMMARY AND RESOURCES

This tutorial gave you information about creating and using the OU Blog resource in Moodle.

To learn more about the OU Blog, visit:

- [https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/OU\\_blog](https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/OU_blog)

### 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 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 send comments or suggestions to:*

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