
13

Managing Your Class

Now that we've covered all the learning tools in Moodle, we'll look at some of the administrative functions that are necessary to keep your course and students organized. This chapter will detail the interfaces for adding and deleting users, creating user groups, creating backups, and managing other course settings. Most of these functions can be accessed from the Administration block. Student groups and the student roster are the only exceptions, and you can manage these from the People block at the top left of the screen.

Before we can create student groups, we need to make sure the right students are enrolled in the course.

Managing Users

There are only a few things you need to do to effectively manage your students. Adding and deleting student enrollments are the primary functions. Later, you may want to edit

student profiles or log in as a student to help them troubleshoot a problem with the course.

Adding Students and Teachers

Most of the time, students will enroll themselves or be added automatically by your university's enrollment system. So there shouldn't be much need for you to manually enroll students. However, if you need to add a TA, an outside guest, or a student who is having a problem with financial aid, you'll need to manually enroll them in your Moodle course.

To add a student:

1. Click Students in the administration area.
2. On the Enroll Students page, shown in Figure 13-1, you'll see two columns. The lefthand column lists the students currently enrolled in the class. The righthand column lists all the user accounts on the system, minus the students already enrolled.

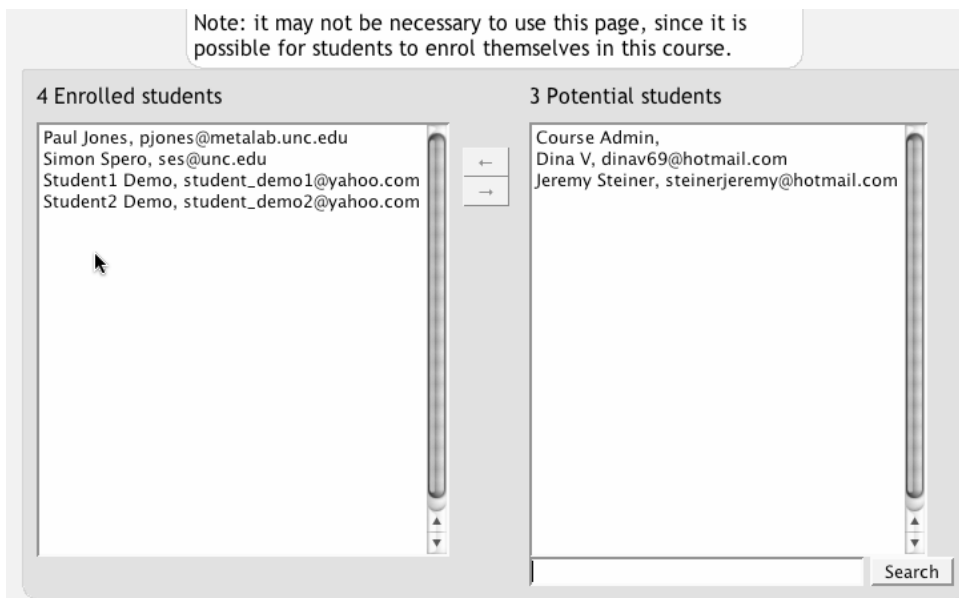


Figure 13-1. Enroll students

Warning: A student must have an account on your Moodle server before you can enroll them in your course.

3. Find the student you want to add to your course in the righthand column. You can limit the list by searching for the student's name or email in the Search box below the righthand column.

4. Select the student's name from the list and click the arrow between the two columns pointing toward the "Enrolled students" column.
5. You can add multiple students by holding down the Shift key to select a number of students in a row. If you want to select multiple students who aren't listed next to each other, hold down the Control key (Apple key on a Mac) and click each name you want to add.

Students will have access to your course as soon as you enroll them. They won't need an enrollment key or to confirm the enrollment.

Removing Students

If a student drops your class, you'll want to remove her from the Moodle enrollment as well. Leaving a student enrolled in your Moodle section when she is not on the official roster makes grading and class management much more difficult. When you record grades, or look for student assignments, having extra students on the roll gets confusing. The student will also have access to your discussion boards and other potentially sensitive information.

Fortunately, removing students is easy. Simply reverse the above procedure.

To remove students:

1. Click Students in the administration area.
2. On the Enroll Students page, you'll see two columns. The lefthand column lists the students currently enrolled in the class. The righthand column lists all of the user accounts on the system, minus the students already enrolled.
3. Find the student you want to remove from your course in the lefthand column.
4. Select the student's name from the list and click the arrow in between the two columns pointing toward the "Potential students" column. The student's name will be moved out of the "Enrolled students" column to the "Potential students" column.
5. You can remove multiple students by holding down the Shift key to select a number of students in a row. If you want to select multiple students who aren't listed next to each other, hold down the Control key (Apple key on a Mac) and click each name you want to add.

Managing Enrollment

Ensuring that only students who are officially enrolled in your course have access to your Moodle site can be tricky. At my university, students can drop and add courses at will for the first three weeks of the semester. Many instructors find it difficult to track the constant movement in the roster. To minimize the amount of work you need to invest in this administrative detail, I recommend a three-pronged strategy.

First, use the course enrollment settings to limit who can enroll in the course and when. Set an enrollment period for the length of your drop/add time. Be sure to set an

enrollment key as well. Only students who know the key will be able to enroll in your course, so you won't need to worry about students enrolling in your course without permission. For more information on these settings, see Chapter 2.

Second, closely monitor your official course roster during the drop/add period. Be consistent about dropping and adding students on a regular basis so you don't have a big mess at the end of registration.

Third, encourage students who are enrolled to create an account and join the Moodle course as quickly as possible. Many instructors make logging in and joining the Moodle course a small, mandatory assignment. This helps students by forcing them to access your online resources early in the semester, and makes enrollment management easier for you since you won't have to add as many students by hand.

Student Groups

Moodle has an unusual, but effective, way of managing small student workgroups. You define your groups then set the group mode for the class or for each tool. The group mode you choose also determines the behavior of each.

There are three group mode options:

No groups

Everyone participates as part of the class. Groups are not used.

Separate groups

Each group can see only their own work. They can't see the work of other groups.

Visible groups

Each group does their own work, but they can see the work of the other groups as well, as shown in Figure 13-2.

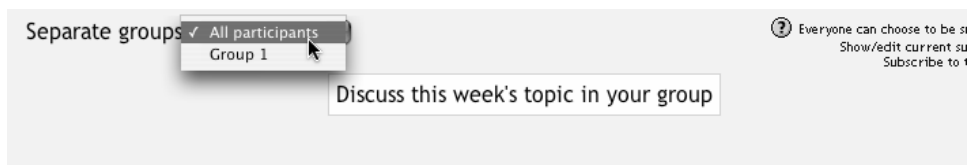


Figure 13-2. Visible groups

Once the group mode is set for the course or for the tool, students will interact with your Moodle course as they normally would. The only difference will be the people they meet in the forums, workshops, assignments and other tools. For example, if you set the group mode of a forum to separate groups, Moodle will create a forum for each group. Each student will see the same link to the forum, but they will be able to access only the discussions for their particular group. You need to create the forum only once; Moodle takes care of creating the individual group forums.

To utilize the group mode, you first need to create the student groups:

1. Click Groups on the People block.
2. Click Turn Editing Mode On. You will then see the Groups editing page with three columns, as shown in Figure 13-3. The left-most column lists the people who are not in a group. Teachers will have a # next to their name. The middle column lists the groups. The right-most column lists the people in a particular group once they have been assigned.

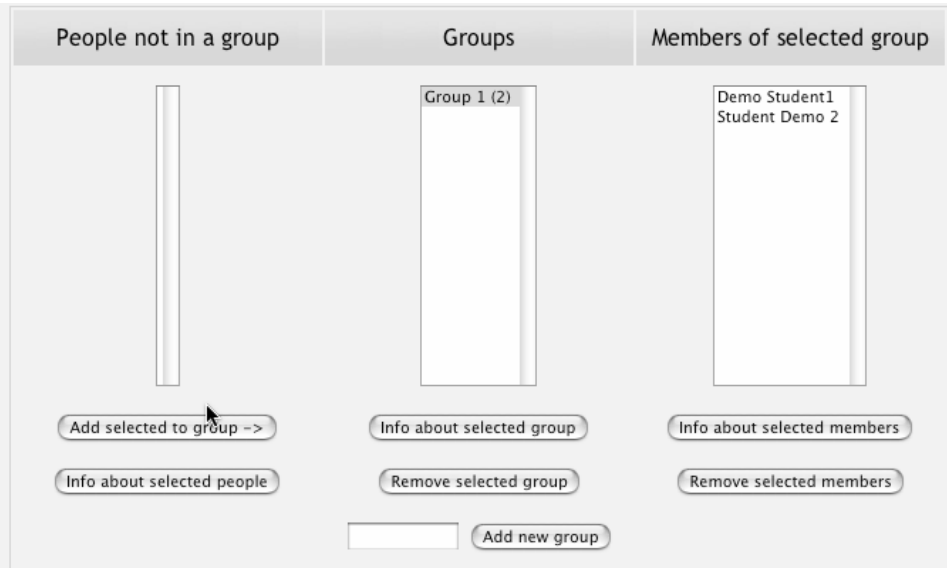





Figure 13-3. Groups editing page

3. At the bottom of the Groups editing page, type the name of a new group and click "Add new group."
4. The name of the group will now appear in the groups list. Select the group you just created.
5. Select the students from the lefthand column you want to add to the group. Then click "Add selected to group ->."
6. Repeat steps 3 through 5 for each student group you need.

Once you've set up your groups, you can set the group mode for each tool. Once you've added a tool to your course, such as a forum, you can set the group mode on the course's main page. When you look at the page in editing mode, the right-most icon next to each tool toggles between the three possible group modes shown in Table 13-1.

Table 13-1. Group mode icons

	No groups mode
	Visible groups mode
	Separate groups mode

These icons will be visible unless you've forced the group mode in the course settings.

Backups

Now that you've spent all this time setting up your course and delivering it to your students, you'll want to make sure you don't lose your work. Moodle gives you a backup tool to create archives of your courses. Backups can also be used to copy course materials from one course to another.

Usually, your system administrator will make backups of the entire system, but it's a good idea to make your own periodic backups of your courses.

To make a backup:

1. Click Backup in the administration area.
2. The next screen, shown in Figure 13-4, lists all the tools available in Moodle. You can choose which tools you want to include in the backup by choosing Yes or No for each tool.
3. You can also choose to backup user data individually for each tool. User data consists of all student files, submissions, and other activities:

Users

Backups the user accounts for everyone in the course. If you select None here, no user data will be backed up.

Logs

Backs up all course activity logs.

User Files

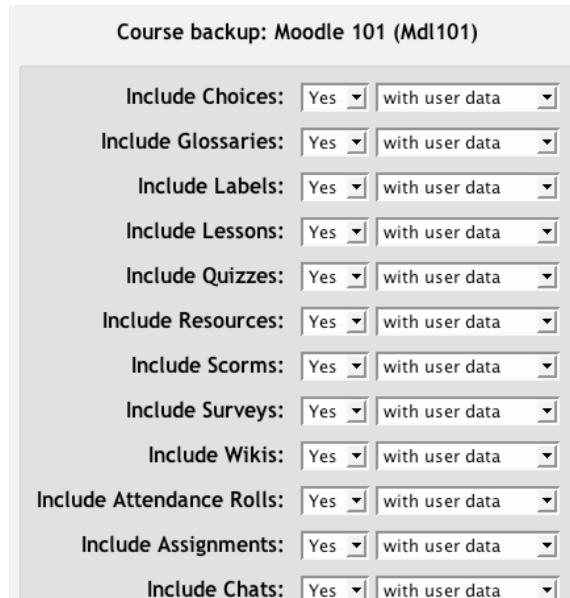
Backs up all student submissions for assignments and other file uploads.

Course Files

Backs up any file stored in the Files area for the course

4. When you have selected your options, click Continue.
5. The next screen previews the files Moodle will include in the backup and give you the name of the backup file. Click Continue at the bottom of the page.
6. The next screen will report the results of the backup. You should see Backup Completed Successfully at the bottom of the page. Click Continue.

7. You will then be taken to the backupdata directory in your files area. The backup file will have a name like “backup-COURSESHORTNAME-DATE-TIME.zip.” Click on the filename of the backup file to download it to your desktop.



Course backup: Moodle 101 (Mdl101)

Include Choices:	Yes	with user data
Include Glossaries:	Yes	with user data
Include Labels:	Yes	with user data
Include Lessons:	Yes	with user data
Include Quizzes:	Yes	with user data
Include Resources:	Yes	with user data
Include Scorms:	Yes	with user data
Include Surveys:	Yes	with user data
Include Wikis:	Yes	with user data
Include Attendance Rolls:	Yes	with user data
Include Assignments:	Yes	with user data
Include Chats:	Yes	with user data

Figure 13-4. Course backup selection

Tip: Some browsers or operating systems will automatically try to decompress a zip archive. If the browser or operating system unpacks the archive, you can simply delete the decompressed file. If you need to upload a backup to restore or copy a course, be sure to use the zip archive file.

Restoring and Copying Courses

Once you’ve created a backup, you can use it to restore your course if there is catastrophic data loss on the server. Alternatively, you can use it to create a copy of your course without student data to create a new course or section.

To restore or load a new shell:

1. If the backup zip file is not in the files area for your course, upload the archive file from your desktop. See Chapter 3 for details on uploading files.
2. Find the backup file in the files area, as shown in Figure 13-5. If you didn’t upload the file manually, it will be located in the backup folder of the course you backed up.

Name	Size	Modified	Action
<input type="checkbox"/> backup-mdl101-20041001-1441.zip	550.4Kb	1 Oct 2004, 02:42 PM	Unzip List Restore Rename
<input type="checkbox"/> backup-mdl101-20041017-2138.zip	551Kb	17 Oct 2004, 09:51 PM	Unzip List Restore Rename
<input type="checkbox"/> backup-mdl101-20050107-1614.zip	4.7Mb	7 Jan 2005, 04:15 PM	Unzip List Restore Rename

With chosen files...

Figure 13-5. Backup file

- Click the Restore option next to the file you want to back up.
- Click Yes under “Do you want to continue?”.
- The next screen will detail everything in the backup you have selected. Click Continue.
- On the next screen, shown in Figure 13-6, first select whether you want to delete the data in the target course before you copy the backup or simply add the data in the backup to the target.

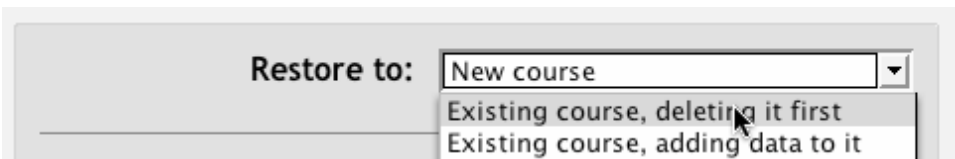


Figure 13-6. Restore a course

- On the same page, select whether you want to restore each tool and whether you want to add user data.

Tip: Most people have two main reasons for restoring course data from a backup: restoring lost data and copying a course shell. If you are trying to restore lost data, you'll want to include all the user data and delete the target course. If you are copying a course shell for another semester or course section, don't copy any user data. If you have data in the target course, be sure not to delete the target course data.

- At the bottom of the page, select whether you want to include users with the course.
- Choose whether you want to include user files.
- Click Continue.
- Next, select the target course for the backup.
- Click “Restore this course now!”. The course data will be moved into the new course.

Once you've restored your course, all the data will be available. If you're copying your course to a new course shell, be sure to check the course start date and the due dates of all your assignments.

Logs

Once your course is up and students are working, Moodle provides you with detailed logs of student activity. When you click Logs in the administration area, you'll be taken to the log-selection panel. Here you can select how you want to view course activity. You can view logs by course, person, date, or activity.

You can see what page the student accessed, the time and date they accessed it, and the IP address they came from, as shown in Figure 13-7.

Displaying 25 records						
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:53 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:52 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	user view all		
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:52 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:51 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum view forum		Group Forum
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:51 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum add		Group Forum
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:51 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course add mod		forum 18
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:50 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:50 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course update		
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:49 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:47 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:33 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	glossary view		Class Glossary
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:27 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	glossary view		Class Glossary
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:26 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	course view		Moodle 101
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:26 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum view discussion		Moodle
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:26 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum view forum		News forum
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:26 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum add discussion		Moodle
Fri	31 December 2004, 11:25 AM	127.0.0.1	Admin User	forum view forum		News forum

Figure 13-7. User log

The logs are useful for tracking students' activity in a class. If a student doesn't spend time with the material, he will have difficulty succeeding in the course. Frequently, students who don't do well simply haven't spent the time working with the material.

If you analyze your class logs on a regular basis, you can monitor when your students engage with the course material. You won't be able to tell exactly how long they spent with a certain activity or resource because the logs report only the time of access. Of course, you can guess how long a student spent with a resource by noting the time the student began the next activity.

Logs can also tell you which resources and activities students find most valuable. For example, if you upload all your Powerpoint slides for student to take notes on in class, but no one accesses them, then you might want to find out why.