

FORUMS

The forum activity enhances the course with the possibility of asynchronous discussions for students. All students can start new discussions, view all posts and reply to them by default. Most common uses:

- **Group Discussion about a Topic**
- **Student "repository"** - this is the easiest way for students to upload files to a course. Everyone can read, reply to each discussion and check the files. The teacher can act as a moderator.

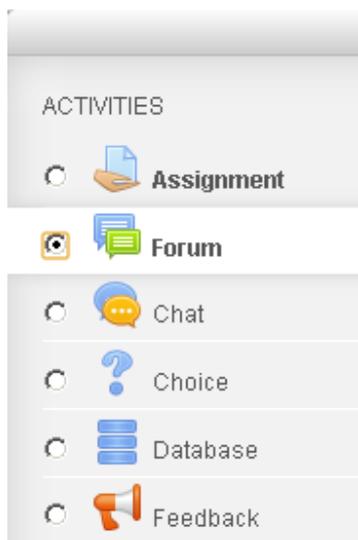
Note: The "Main Course Forum" (former general news) is automatically part of all courses.

It is recommended for important news or questions about the course. Both teachers and students can post here. All course participants will receive an email about the posts.

HOW TO CREATE A FORUM FOR STUDENT DISCUSSIONS?

STEP 1. : Go to your course and click on the **TURN EDITING ON** button (top right)

STEP 2. Many icons and menus will appear. Click on the menu called **ADD an ACTIVITY and RESOURCE** + **Add an activity or resource** at the appropriate topic and **Choose FORUM**. (Double click or select and click "ADD" at the bottom.



STEP 3. A form will appear. You have to fill in the first few fields and change the settings if necessary. You can leave most of the settings on the default value except the following (detailed description is available next to each field): 

Click **Save and return to course when you are done**. You will see that a link appeared with the name of the forum. You just have to inform your students about the forum and the work can start. Make sure that you give all information necessary for them.

Important Settings

- **Forum name (mandatory):** This will appear as the link name on the main course page.
- **Forum description (mandatory):** Fill the details and expectations to this field.

You can copy paste the following section too, to provide technical help:
You can find help and details at the following link:

<http://ceulearning.ceu.hu/mod/resource/view.php?id=9351>.

- **Forum type:**

a) *Standard forum for general use (default)* – Most of the time you want to use this. It is an open forum where anyone can start a new topic at any time. This is the best general-purpose forum.

b) *Bloglike format (NEW)*: The same as standard forum, but all of the starting posts appear in full length on the main forum page with "discuss this" links.

c) *A single simple discussion* - is just a single topic, all on one page. Useful for short, focused discussions.

d) *Each person posts one discussion* - Each person can post exactly one new discussion topic (everyone can reply to them though). This is useful when you want each student to start a discussion about a chosen topic and everyone else responds to these.

e) *Q And A Forum* - The Q & A forum requires students to post their perspectives before viewing other students' postings. Students can view and respond to others' postings only after their initial posting.. This feature allows equal initial posting opportunity among all students, thus encouraging original and independent thinking. **Note:** The teacher have to start the first discussion topic after the creation of the forum (this should be a question you ask from the students) This action is recommended for other forum types as well, to encourage the proactive use of this tool.

Ratings

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

- **Forum aggregation (grading for forums)** defines how all the ratings given to each individual post of students are combined to form the final grade (for the whole forum activity). If you select this option, a menu will appear at the bottom right side of every post students make. Moodle will calculate a final grade depending on the aggregation method you choose:



Average (default): The **mean** of all the ratings given to all posts in that forum.

Count: The **number of rated posts** becomes the final grade. (rewards activity)

Max: The **highest** rating is returned as the final grade. (only the best post counts)

Min: The **lowest** rating is returned as the final grade. (only the worst post counts)

Sum: All the ratings for a particular user are **added together**. (but can't exceed the value of the **grade** – see below.)

- **Scale (Grade):** The *default 100* means that you can assign any value to the posts of individual students from **0 to 100**. You can change this value (number of the **maximum** points students can get for this activity). Unlike assignments, it is possible for multiple teachers to give different ratings to posts. Moodle will calculate all of them depending on the chosen aggregation method. \

Note about deadlines: Unlike assignments, this activity **does not have** the option to set **deadlines**. If you want to give a deadline to students, you have to use other methods.

For example: Send messages with the news forum, and/or create an “offline” type assignment with the deadline linking to this forum This deadline will appear for students in their calendar and “upcoming events” block as assignment deadlines automatically do.

- **Subscription: Email notifications about posts**

When a person is subscribed to a forum it means that they will be sent email copies of every post in that forum. (emails are sent about 30 minutes after the post was first written).

People can usually choose whether or not they want to be subscribed to each forum. However, if you choose to **force subscription** on a particular forum then all course users will be subscribed automatically, even those that enroll at a later time. This is especially useful in forums towards the beginning of the course (before everyone has worked out that they can subscribe to these emails themselves). If you choose the option "**Auto Subscription**" then all future course users will be subscribed initially but they can unsubscribe themselves at any time. If you choose "Optional Subscription" then they will not be subscribed by default but will be able to subscribe themselves. The default is “force subscription for all **Optional forums**”.

Important note about changing the subscription: This setting will not unsubscribe existing participants!

Changing from "Auto Subscription " to "Subscription disabled" *will not unsubscribe existing users*, it will only affect future course users.

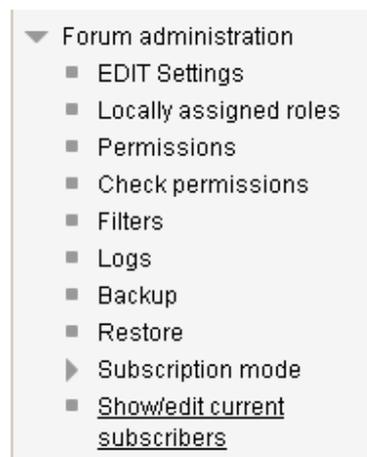
Changing to "Auto Subscription" WILL subscribe existing course users however (new in 2.5). You can also *subscribe/unsubscribe existing users manually*..

STEP 1. Go to the forum.

STEP 2. Show/Edit current subscribers (bottom at forum administration)

STEP 3. Turn editing on (this button only affects this page)

STEP 4. Select the users and use the **add/ remove buttons** to subscribe/unsubscribe them.



How to Use FORUMS

The Forum activity is a very important tool; it is where most course discussions can take place. There are different types of forums in Moodle, different forums can be structured in different ways. The postings can include attachments. Participants have to subscribe, after that they will receive copies of each new posting to their email.

If you have this option you can click on the link to deactivate automatic email copies of posts to this forum

This forum allows everyone to choose whether to subscribe or not Everyone can now choose to be subscribed [Unsubscribe from this forum](#)

You can create a new discussion if you like

Read the posts of a discussion and/or reply

Add a new discussion topic

Discussion	Started by	Replies	Last post
Topic by a student	Test Student	0	Test Student Mon, 27 Sep 2010, 01:32 PM
art	Gabor Acs	1	Gabor Acs Mon, 27 Sep 2010, 12:31 PM
General questions	Teacher1 as a student	0	Teacher1 as a student Thu, 2 Sep 2010, 04:00 PM

You are replying to this previous entry

Change the subject line if you want to

You can write your post here. You can use different format, use links, embed videos as well with the use of the word processor

Change your settings about automatic emailing of posts to this forum

Attach a file if needed

Post to forum

To reply to a thread, click on the name of the thread in the forum, and click the “Reply” link at the bottom right of the post you want to reply to. Give the thread a title in the “Subject” heading, and type your post in the “Message” section. You can attach a file if needed. When you are done, check your post for errors and click the “Post to forum” button at the bottom. Be sure to check the Subscription setting underneath the message box — if you want to receive emails of every post to the forum, set it to “Send me email copies of posts to this forum.” If not, set it to “I don’t want email copies of posts to this forum.” Some teachers may have set their forums to force you to be subscribed or to not allow you to be subscribed, in which cases this option will not appear. After you’ve posted, you will have 30 minutes to edit or delete your post.

To post a new thread in a forum, go to the forum, then click the “Add a new discussion topic” button at the top of the list of threads.

The fields are the same as above.

You can change whether you’re subscribed to a given forum at any time by clicking on the name of the forum, then clicking the “Subscribe/Unsubscribe me from this forum” link in the top right of the window (if your teacher allows it).



How to upload files?

The most convenient way to upload files is the **drag and drop** method. Just open the folder on your computers' desktop (containing the file), select, hold the left mouse button, and move the pointer to the box and release. You will see that the file is uploading to the course. Make sure that you

are using an up-to-date browser: *Chrome 11, Firefox 4, Safari 5, IE 10*

Alternatively (or if you are using an old browser) you can click to “**Add**” > **Upload a file** > **Choose** the file on your computer and click the “**Upload this file**” button.

If you experience any problems, check the file size / extension and your browser version. .

NOTE: As with any other forum it is advisable to create your long reply in an offline word processor (e.g. MS Word) and copy/paste the text later to prevent problems and lose your text.

RESTRICTION AND GROUP WORK

The **Groups** feature allows you to divide the students in your course into different groups to easily separate them. Students can use Moodle activities as members of these groups afterwards, allowing them to work together closely.

MAIN BENEFITS

- **No need for multiple activities**

Using Groups, you only need to **create a single instance of any activity**, rather than one for each group. This feature is the best with **forums**. You will be able to handle the groups separately but group members will be able to cooperate only with their own group.

E.g. Groups of students share presentations or have discussions with a forum . Alternatively small groups of students can work together on a topic – this will increase individual participation and allow you to compare the different conclusions drawn by each group.

- **Restrict Access**

Groups can also be used to **restrict access** to a particular resource or activity to a specified group of students. (a file, and assignment, etc – see **Groupings** for more information.)

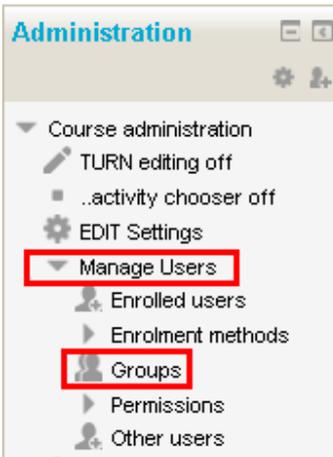
- **Easier grading for assignments**

Groups can make it easier for you to separate different groups of students while giving feedback and grading.(view data by groups)

- **Makes several other special workarounds available**

For example, creating “**technical**” groups for each student in the course (and assigning only one student to each group) makes it possible to easily restrict access to forum posts of other students. You can change this setting later and change the group forum to a normal one to allow students to read and respond to the posts of their classmates.

HOW TO CREATE GROUPS



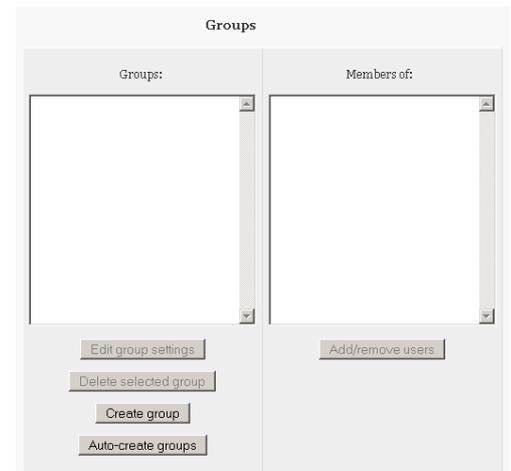
It is important to set up the groups **before** releasing an Activity using them.

STEP 1. : Go to your course and click on **Manage users**, then **Groups** in the Administration block (menu).

STEP 2. Create the Groups

You will see a screen with two columns: *Groups* and *Members*.

If no groups have been set up, both columns will be empty. Create each group by clicking the **Create Group** button, typing a name



into the Group name field and clicking **Create group**.

The other fields are optional. The new group then appears in the left-hand column.

STEP 3. Add users to the Groups

This process is manual and is **dependent on the students having already enrolled on your course**.

Select and highlight the group you want to set by clicking it once. Click **Add/Remove Users button on the right**.

You will see lists of *existing* (left side) and *potential* (right side) members. In the “Potential members” list, select the users you want to add to the group (hold down the Ctrl key to select multiple users). Then click the **“add”** button to add them to the group. Repeat these steps for each group you want to use. You can add a single user to multiple groups if it is needed.

Note: You do not have to add teachers to any groups by default, teachers can **check all of them**.

However, you may need to add teachers (including yourself) to separate groups if you want to restrict them from interacting with **all** groups. This way, they will be able to check and grade work of those groups they are members of.

Note 2: Students will not be notified about this automatically, and not able to see the Groups menu. You need to notify them by other means (like by using the News forum).

Alternatively you can use the New activity: **Group Choice, which enables students to select their own groups themselves**.

This is a separate activity, you just need to fill the mandatory fields, set the groups to select from and add the maximum number of students allowed in each group. Details:

https://docs.moodle.org/30/en/Group_choice_activity

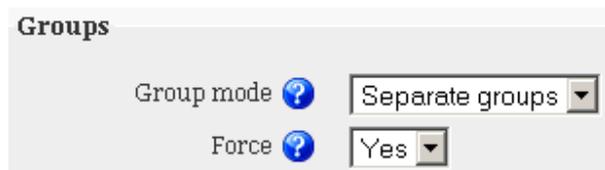
STEP 4. Enable Groups for the Activity

Go back to the main page of the course and “Turn editing on” if needed. Find the **group icon**  next to the activity (forum, assignment, etc.) to change the group settings.

- **Visible groups:** students can view other groups’ activities *but can not participate only in their own*.
- **Separate groups:** students can neither view nor participate in other groups’ activities (other groups are invisible for them)

Alternatively you can use Edit icon  for the activity you want to use for group work and click on it. Scroll down to **“common module settings”** and change the group mode, then click “save and return to course”.

CHANGE THE ENTIRE COURSE INTO “GROUP MODE”



The screenshot shows the 'Groups' settings in Moodle. There are two dropdown menus: 'Group mode' which is currently set to 'Separate groups', and 'Force' which is currently set to 'Yes'. Both dropdowns have a question mark icon to their left.

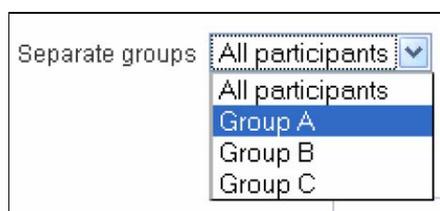
If you want to set the group work for **all** activities in a course, then go to the Edit **Settings** in the **Administration menu**, and select the Groups menu. Change **Group mode** there (separate or visible groups). Also change the **Force** option to “yes” (below this.)

Important Note: this setting will take place in the “participants” block as well, which can block students to see the members of other groups in “separate groups” mode.

If you change only the “**group mode**” but not the “**force**” option then the activities **will not change**, but the students will be able to check the teams / team members in the **participants** block of the course (top left).

Note: Changing this setting will also change the default group mode of any new activity that you may add later.

USING THE CONFIGURED GROUPS IN ACTIVITIES



The screenshot shows a dropdown menu for 'Separate groups'. The menu is open, displaying four options: 'All participants' (which is selected), 'Group A', 'Group B', and 'Group C'.

Go to the activity where you set the group work. You will see a new drop-down menu at the top left side, where you can select if you want to see/interact with all participants or only the members of one group.

Forums - Communicate with just a group of students in an activity

Moodle Teachers can post to all groups or to individual groups. Remember to select the group to whom you want to post from the drop-down menu in the top-left corner before you post to a forum. If you choose “**all participants**”, members of **every group** will be able to read your post – but unable to respond in that topic!

Assignments/other individual activities: Groups will not change the way students interact with assignments as these are **individual activities**. But groups can make it easier for you to separate different groups of students when you grade assignments or give feedback (view students by groups)

ADVANCED MATERIAL - GROUPINGS: USING DIFFERENT SETS OF GROUPS & RESTRICTING ACCESS TO ITEMS

Sometimes you will not use the same groups of students for the whole course and you will need a different setup for different activities. The **Groupings function** is designed for this purpose. A grouping is a collection of groups within a course, also used to restrict access to an item to a subset of students.

For example you may create a set of groups for the course in general and a separate set for a particular project.

HOW TO SET UP GROUPINGS?

To use Groupings you must first have created at least one group. (see the process on the previous pages).

STEP 1. Click on the “Groupings” tab at the top of the Groups page.

Grouping	Groups	Activities	Edit
First Grouping	None	0	⚙️ ➤ 👤
Second Grouping	None	0	⚙️ ➤ 👤

STEP 2. Click the “Create grouping” button, type a name for the grouping and save changes.

Step 2. →

STEP 3. Add Groups to the Grouping

On the Groupings page click on the “Show groups” icon in the edit column and use the “Add” button to place the appropriate Groups to the Grouping..

STEP 4. Apply a Grouping to an Activity or Resource

Common module settings

Group mode Separate groups

Grouping*

Available for group members only*

Go to the resource or activity you want to change and click on the **Edit icon** next to it. Scroll down and select the appropriate **grouping**, then “save and return to course”:

Note: If you do not see this option, you have to click on the “**show advanced**” button on the right side.

Group mode must be set to separate or visible groups as well as a prerequisite.

If a grouping is selected, then all users assigned to the groups within the grouping will be able to use the activity, but they will still work by groups in that activity as usual.

Important note: If the “Available for group members only” checkbox is also checked, then *the activity (or resource) will only be available to users assigned to groups within the selected grouping, or to any group member if no grouping is selected.* (for other users this activity will be completely invisible).

EXAMPLES FOR GROUPINGS

Example 1. Not all students need to participate in all activities in the course

You have 12 students and 4 different projects. 6 different students work on each project, all students will take part in 2 projects. What you have to do:

Grouping	Groups	
Project 1	Team 1	STEP 1. You will create 4 groups (Team 1, 2, 3, 4) and assign the appropriate students to these. → Team 1 will contain Student A,B,C,D,E,F;
Project 2	Team 2	→ Team 2 (G,H,I,J,K,L);
Project 3	Team 3	→ Team 3 (A,B,C,G,H,I);
Project 4	Team 4	→ Team 4 (D,E,F,J,K,L).

STEP 2. You need to create the 4 Groupings as well (Project 1,2,3,4)

STEP 3. Assign the groups to the groupings (Team 1 to Project 1, etc.).

STEP 4. In the end, you create an individual Forum for each project (4 forums total), and select the appropriate Grouping in them and check “available for group members only”. (E.g. *Group Mode – Separate Groups; Grouping – Team 1; Check “available for group members only”*)

You are done. Each student will see only the 2 project forums they are members of and will be able to work with only the other team members for that project. You will see all four groups, and easily supervise the work in them.

Example 2. Everyone will participate in all activities, but the composition of groups will change

Lets modify the previous example for the above purpose. You have the same 12 students and 2 different projects. All 12 will take part in each project and will be assigned to groups of 4, but with different classmates. What you have to do:

STEP 1. You will need 6 groups this time (Team 1-2-3 for project 1 and 4-5-6 for project 2) and assign the appropriate students to these.

For the first project:

Team 1 will contain Student A, B, C, D;

Team 2 (E,F,G,H);

Team 3 (I,J,K,L);

Second Project

Team 4 will contain Student A, E, K, D;

Team 5 (B,I,H,J);

Team 6 (G,L,F,C);

STEP 2. You need to create 2 Groupings for the 2 projects (Project 1, 2)

STEP 3. Assign the groups to the groupings (Team 1,2,3 to Project 1, Team 4,5,6 to project 2).

STEP 4. In the end, you create an individual Forum for each project (2 forums total), and select the appropriate Grouping in them (e.g. *Group Mode – Separate Groups; Grouping – Team 1*)

You are done. Each student will see both projects forums and will be able to work with the appropriate team members for both projects.