

Student Groups in VISION

Moodle has an unusual but effective way of managing small student workgroups within your course. You can define groups at the course level, and then set each activity to a group mode or leave it available to everyone. The group mode you choose may also determine the behavior of the module. Think of groups as a filter. If you are a member of a group within a course, and an activity is set to group mode, Moodle will filter out any work from anyone who is not part of your group. You are all looking at the same activity, but you can't interact with anyone who is not in your group.

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.

Once the group mode is set for the course or activity, students will interact with your Moodle course as they normally would. The only difference will be the people they meet in certain activities, such as forums. 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 she will be able to access only the discussions for her 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 in the Administration block.
2. On the Groups page, there are two columns. The left column lists the groups you have created. Initially, this list is empty, as there are no groups created by default. The right column lists the students assigned to the selected group.
3. To create a new group, click the "Create group" button at the bottom of the page.
4. On the "Create groups" page, set the options for your group:
 - Group name
 - This is the name of the group displayed in various places throughout your course.
 - Group description (Optional)
 - Write a brief description of the group and its purpose. The description is displayed above the list of group members on the Participants page.
 - Enrollment key
 - Enrollment keys allow users to enroll themselves in a course. You can set an enrollment key in your course settings. If you set a group enrollment key too, then anyone who enrolls in the course using the group key will also automatically be made a member of the group.
 - In order to use a group key, you must also set an enrollment key in your course settings, otherwise students will not be prompted to enter a key when they attempt to enroll. Students only need to enter the group enrollment key and do not need to know the course settings enrollment key. The group key over-rides the course key.

5. Click the “Create group” button.
6. The name of the group will now appear in the groups list. Select the group you just created.
7. On the “Add/remove users” page, there are two columns. The left column lists the existing members of the group, and the right column lists the potential members. To add a student to the group, (who has not used an group enrollment key) select the student’s name from the potential members list and use the left-facing arrow button to add the student to the list in the left-hand column.
 - As for assigning users the role of student in your course, 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 (or Apple key on a Mac) and click each name you want to add.
8. Repeat steps 3 to 7 for each group you need.
 - It’s possible to assign students to more than one group. If you do so, it can be confusing for both you and the students. You will need to carefully watch the numbers of students assigned to each group to make sure you haven’t left someone out. Students will need to be careful about interacting with the right group in the right place. If you have set a module to ‘separate groups’ mode, students will need to select between the groups where they are members. If you have a lot of students to organize into groups, you might like to try the “batch upload of groups” facility. Click “Import” in the Administration block, and then follow the instructions in the “upload groups” help file.

If you’ve not forced the group mode in your course settings, you can set it for each activity, either when adding the activity (in the common module settings), or by clicking the group mode icon opposite the activity name when editing is turned on for your course page. The group mode icon toggles between the three possible group modes.

If you’ve forced the group mode in your course settings, then you will not be able to toggle between group modes on your course page.