

Organizing Learners Using Groups

Moodle groups allows instructors to assign learners to one or more groups. Groups can be set at the course or activity levels.

Using groups allows the instructor to:

- Completely isolate groups of learners from each other.
- Partially separate groups, where one group can see other groups and each groups' activity, but not interact with the other group(s).
- Identify each group with an icon.

The *Forced groups* feature in the course settings can allow different classes (and their instructors) to take the same course asynchronously without creating a "new" course.

It is not pressing for instructors in the blended LINC scheme to use groups, as the learners are in daily contact with each other and with the instructor. However, using groups may be relevant to project tasks.

You can assign tutors and learners to one or more groups within a course. Groups are defined at course level and the group mode (No groups, visible groups, separate groups) is then set for each activity. For some activities, such as forums and wikis, setting the group will restrict interaction within the activity. For other activities, such as assignments and quizzes, setting the group allows tutors to filter results. To hide resources or activities from all those not in particular groups of learners, use Groupings.

Group levels

There are two levels of groups:

1. **Course level** - The group mode defined at the course level is the default mode for all activities defined within that course. To use groups, a group mode must first be set up in *Settings>Course administration>Edit settings*.
2. **Activity level** - Each activity that supports groups can also have its own group mode defined. If the course setting *Force group mode* is set to *Yes*, then the option to define the group mode for individual activities is not available. If it is set to *No*, then the instructor may change the group mode.

Group modes

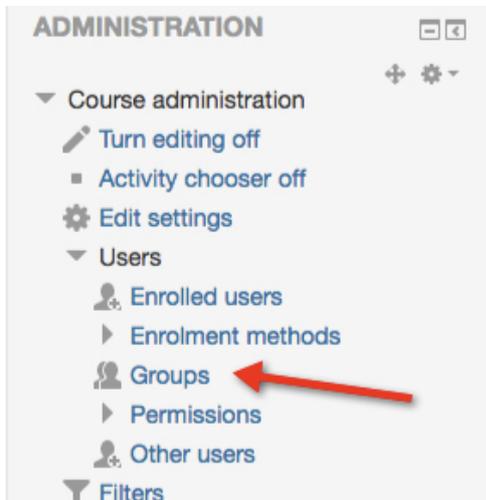
There are three modes of groups:

1. **No groups** - There are no sub groups; all learners are part of one big community.
2. **Separate groups** - Each group can see only their own group; others are invisible.
3. **Visible groups** - Each group works in their own group, but can also see other groups. (The other groups' work is read-only to those outside the group.)

Adding groups to a course

Learners and staff can be added to groups in Moodle either automatically (good for large groups) or manually (if only small groups need to be created).

1. Click *Groups* under *Users* in the *Course Administration* section of the *Administration* block.



2. Click the *Create group* button.
3. Type in the *Group* name.

A screenshot of the 'Group name*' input field. The text 'Group 1' is entered, and a red arrow points to the end of the text. A 'Create group' button is visible above the field.

4. Type a *Group* description (optional).

A screenshot of the 'Group description' text area. It features a rich text editor toolbar with icons for text formatting (bold, italic, underline, list, link, unlink) and media insertion (image, video, file). The text 'This group will...' is entered in the text area.

LINC courseware users do not need to use the group enrolment key. This key allows users into a course and automatically makes them a member of this group.

5. Click the *Save changes* button.

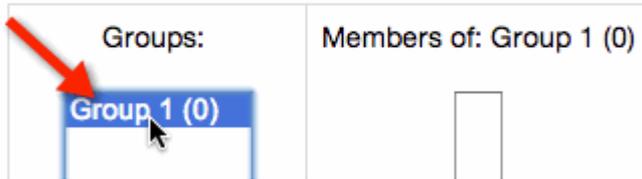
The group should now appear on the *Groups* page.

Adding students to a group manually

1. Go to the *Groups* page (Click *Groups* under *Users* in the *Course Administration* section of the *Administration* block).

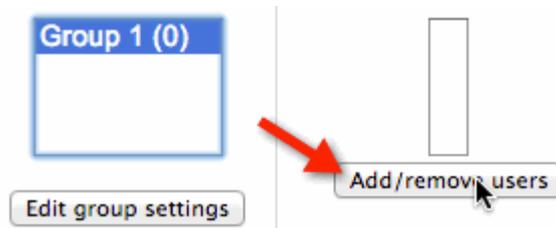
2. Select the name of group to which the learners should be added in the box under *Groups*.

LINC 4-EL Groups



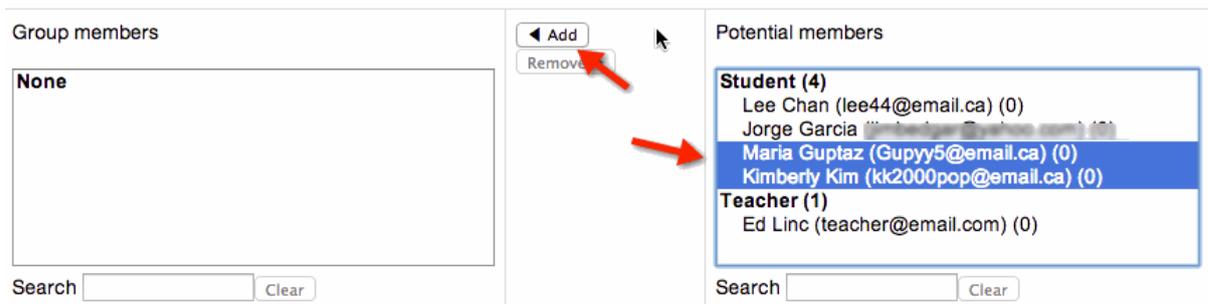
The number in brackets after the group name displays the number of group members.

3. Click the *Add/remove users* button.



4. Click the names of the participants to be added to the group under *Potential members*. Use Ctrl + click (for Windows) or Cmd + click (for Mac) to select multiple users.

The names of course participants will be displayed alphabetically by surname.



5. Click the *Add* button. If there are a large number of course participants, use the *Search* (name or email) text box to find, select and add the learner.
6. Once the task of adding people to the group is completed, click the *Back to groups* button (or navigate elsewhere). There is no need to save.

Group members

Student (2)
 Maria Gupta (Guppy5@email.ca)
 Kimberly Kim (kk2000pop@email.ca)

Search

Search options ▶

◀ Add

Remove ▶

Potential members

Student (2)
 Lee Chan (lee44@email.ca) (0)
 Jorge Garcia (jorge.garcia@university.com) (0)

Teacher (1)
 Ed Linc (teacher@email.com) (0)

Search

Auto-creating groups with learners assigned automatically

To create groups automatically with learners assigned randomly to each group:

1. Go to the *Groups* page by clicking *Groups* under *Users* in the *Course Administration* section of the *Administration* block.
2. Click the *Auto-create groups* button.
3. Specify either the number of groups or the number of members per group.
4. Enter the group/member count.
5. Enter a group naming scheme. Group # will generate Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 etc. | Group @ will generate Group A, Group B, Group C etc.

Important Note for Moodle 3.1: The following image looks quite different in the new version of Moodle, but the principles and fields are the same, if arranged slightly differently in the new version.

▼ **Auto-create groups**

Select members from role

Specify

Group/member count*

Naming scheme

Create in grouping

Grouping name

Select members from role:
- determines which course roles group members will be added from

Specify:
Numbers of groups or Numbers per group

Naming scheme:
Group @ specifies Group A, B, C ... or Group # specifies Group 1, 2, 3 ...

Create in grouping:
- a grouping joins one or more groups together as a unit

6. Click the + *Show more* link for additional choices.

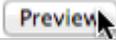
Prevent last small group*

Allocate members*

Naming scheme

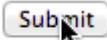
Prevent last small group:
- will allocate additional members to an existing group instead of adding a new group

Allocate members:
options include random, alphabetically by first or last name

7. Select *Randomly* in the *Allocate members* drop-down menu (to assign members of groups randomly).
8. Click the *Preview* button to preview group allocation. 
9. Review the distribution of group members. (Change the settings and click *Preview* again as needed.)

Groups preview

Groups (2)	Group members	User count (4)
Group A	Lee Chan, Kimberly Kim	2
Group B	Maria Guptaz, Jorge Garcia	2

10. Click the *Submit* button when the group allocation is satisfactory. 

Setting the group mode to change the way an activity behaves

Activities will behave differently depending on the group mode chosen. For example, using groups will allow instructors to filter assignments or restrict with whom learners work in forums and wikis.

1. Start from the course homepage and click the *Turn editing on* button.
2. Click the *Edit settings* icon  next to the activity to which groups should be applied.
3. Scroll down the *Settings* page and under *Common module settings*, choose the appropriate group mode from the drop-down list.