



Teaching with Technology Tip

CREATING AND EDITING GROUPS IN MOODLE

In Moodle, teachers can create groups so that students can work together and communicate with specific classmates. Creating groups also allows teachers to restrict course content to specific groups. For different course sections combined into one Moodle shell, groups can support faculty sorting student work and grades by section.

Group Modes

Moodle establishes three different ways that topics, activities, and resources interact with groups:

- When **Separate Groups** is assigned to an activity/resource, only students in the same group can interact with each other and see each other's work.
- When **Visible Groups** is assigned to an activity/resource, students can only interact with students in their own group, but they can view and read the work of other groups.
- When **No Groups** is assigned to an activity/resource, students can see and interact with everyone in the course.

The assignment of a group setting can happen at several levels within Moodle. The default course-wide setting is **No Groups**, meaning that each new activity/resource will be assigned that group setting unless you change that setting on an individual item.

*Note: If you have requested combined sections for a course, for FERPA reasons, the default group assignment for the course will be set to **Separate Groups**. However, this setting still permits teachers to override group settings for individual activities and resources if the purpose for combining the sections is to facilitate large group collaboration concurrently happening in a face-to-face environment (e.g., student teaching or Hogsback Journal).*

Setting Up Groups

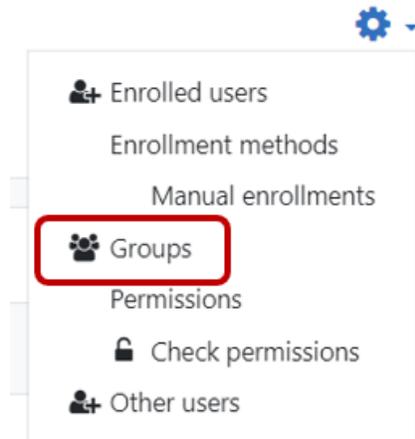
Students can be members of multiple groups within Moodle. However, when selecting either Separate or Visible groups for an item, all students will be able to see that item unless you restrict access by group. For example, if a student is in both Group 1 and Group 2, they will be able to interact in a discussion forum with both of those groups. Therefore, if you want student groups to change membership throughout the semester, you must reorganize the groups' membership or establish **Groupings** for groups, not simply create new and different groups.

Creating Groups

Within a course, click on the **Participants** button in the left-side navigation drawer.



Open the Participants **Action menu**, and select **Groups**.



At the bottom of the screen, Moodle provides several options for administering groups. When it comes to getting started, teachers have two options:

- Clicking on **Create group** will simply allow you to set up a group and add whomever you wish later.
- Clicking on **Auto-create groups** will guide you through separating an entire class into groups.

Auto-create Groups (Multiple Groups at One Time)

Under the **General** heading, you must make three important decisions:

1. **Naming scheme:** Moodle automatically assigns group names. In this box, **Group @** means that Moodle will automatically assign names based on a letter (i.e., Group A, Group B, etc.) Changing to **Group #** means that Moodle will automatically assign names based on a number (i.e., Group 1, Group 2, etc.)
2. **Auto create based on:** Select **Number of groups** to tell how many groups you wish Moodle to create and divide students between those groups. Select **Members per group** to tell Moodle to create groups of a certain size and create as many groups as needed to do so.
3. **Group/member count:** In this box, you will tell Moodle how many groups to create or how many students to put into a group.

Under the **Group members** heading, you can make some optional decisions

4. **Allocate members:** Use this dropdown menu to tell Moodle exactly how you would like the groups made. The default is **Randomly**, but you can also have Moodle create groups alphabetically by a students' last names, for instance.
5. **Prevent last small group:** If you selected to create groups of a certain number, you can check this box so that Moodle will break up a group that doesn't have the minimum number of members and make some slightly larger groups elsewhere.
6. **Ignore users in groups:** If you already have some students in groups and are simply creating more, you can check this box to eliminate those group members from this group creation process.

▼ **General**

Naming scheme ①

Auto create based on ②

Group/member count ③

Group messaging ③

▼ **Group members**

Select members with role

Select members from grouping

Allocate members ④

Prevent last small group ⑤

Ignore users in groups ⑥

Include only active enrolments ?

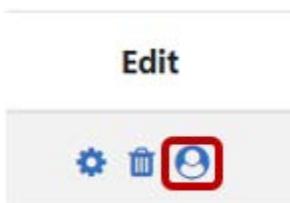
Click on **Submit** to create the groups. Clicking on **Preview** will show you the groups before you click on **Submit** and finalize them.

Create Group (Adding a Single Group)

Clicking on **Create group** will bring you to screen where you can add a single group. Simply name the group then click **Submit**.

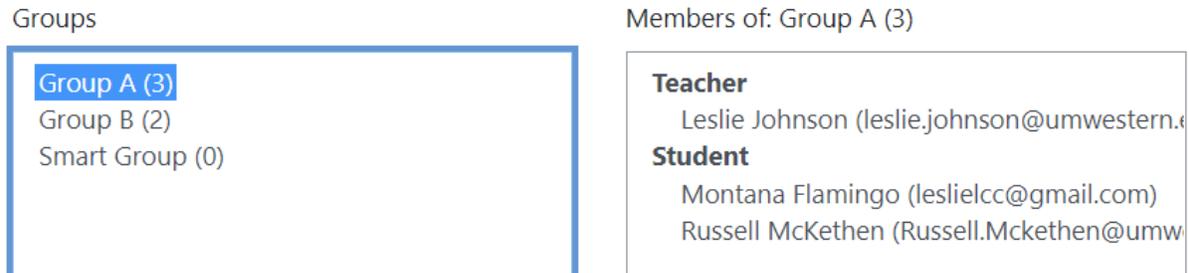
A Brief Word about Groupings

Groupings are like “categories” for groups. They can be created under the **Groupings** tab in group creation area. Groupings allow you to establish self-enrolling groups as well as restrict access to the groups within a certain grouping. When you auto-create groups, you can ask Moodle to create a new grouping and add all of those groups into it, or you can ask Moodle to add the new groups to an existing category. If you have an existing grouping and would like to add groups to it, simply begin by navigating to the **Groupings** tab. Under the **Edit** menu for the grouping click on the **Group** icon then add the groups you wish to that grouping.



Modify Groups and Add Group Members

Once you have groups created, Moodle will display them in the **Groups** tab. Clicking on a group's name in the left box will highlight it and display the group members in the right box.

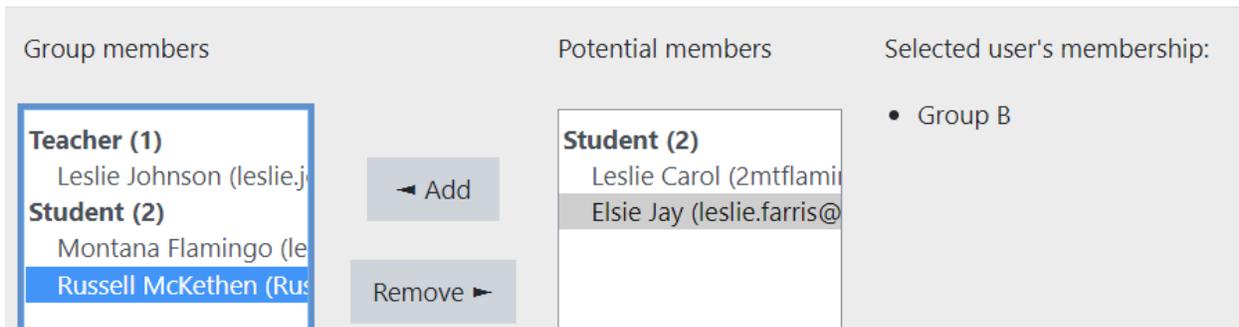


The screenshot shows two panels. The left panel, titled "Groups", contains a list: "Group A (3)" (highlighted with a blue border), "Group B (2)", and "Smart Group (0)". The right panel, titled "Members of: Group A (3)", lists members under two roles: "Teacher" (Leslie Johnson) and "Student" (Montana Flamingo and Russell McKethen).

Highlighting a group also provides you options to modify the group. From there you can then select to **Edit group settings**, **Delete selected group**, or **Add/remove users**.

Changing Group Membership

When you enter the **Add/remove users menu**, you will see the current group members on the left and the potential group members on the right. Highlight the student you wish to add or delete and click the appropriate button. Once the changes are made, click on **Back to groups**.



The screenshot shows the "Add/remove users" interface. It is divided into three sections: "Group members" (left), "Potential members" (middle), and "Selected user's membership:" (right). In "Group members", "Teacher (1)" (Leslie Johnson) and "Student (2)" (Montana Flamingo and Russell McKethen) are listed. In "Potential members", "Student (2)" (Leslie Carol and Elsie Jay) are listed. Between the sections are "Add" and "Remove" buttons. The "Selected user's membership:" section shows "Group B".