

# Getting Started with Moodle

## **About Moodle**

The word Moodle is an acronym for *Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment* which doesn't mean much to most people. The important thing to know is that Moodle will help you as an educator create a quality online course. The Moodle server runs completely on the ATLAS web servers so there is nothing more than a browser required to modify course content or to access that content.

## **Requesting a Moodle site from ATLAS**

To request a Moodle course, from ATLAS, please visit the ATLAS Moodle site at <https://www.atlas.uiuc.edu/atlas/service/moodle>. If you are requesting Moodle for a course, you must be teaching a course within the College of LAS to use Moodle. You can also use Moodle for purposes other than teaching which should be noted on the form when requesting the course. After making your request, please allow up to 5 days for the course to appear. You will receive an E-mail with pertinent details about your course when it is ready.

## **Logging in to Moodle**

The URL you will use to login to Moodle is <http://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu>. This will take you to the main Moodle screen. Please login using your AD credentials. If you don't know what your AD password is or are having trouble using it, please visit <http://www.ad.uiuc.edu/accounts.aspx> to reset your account. After your course is created, you should be able to browse to the course in which you are an instructor by choosing the semester and rubric. If you do not see the course that you requested, please contact ATLAS at [atlas-tls@uiuc.edu](mailto:atlas-tls@uiuc.edu).

## **Student Enrollment in your Moodle Site**


The students in your class are responsible for enrolling themselves in your course. You should give them the URL for your class which will be something like <https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu/course/view.php?id=2>. The ID number at the end is the most important part as it identifies which course is associated with that URL. Alternatively, you can give your students the URL to the main Moodle page (<http://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu>) and let them browse for your course. The courses are grouped according to semester and rubric.

It is possible to limit enrollment to your Moodle site with an enrollment key which can be set in the settings menu from inside your site. This key is like a password that you give only to your students (via E-mail or on your syllabus) and they will need this to log in. If students get in that you do not want in your class, it is possible for you to remove that student. You could then restrict them from re-enrolling by changing the enrollment key.

## **Settings and Course Formats**

As the teacher and editor of your course, you are able to change many of the settings of your course. After entering your course, you should see an administration menu to the left. The second item under here is Settings. Clicking on this will take you to the Edit Course Settings Page where you can alter the description of your course, the format, the course start

date and many other settings. *We ask that you do not alter the course category or the ID number of your course.*

Most of these settings are pretty self-explanatory, and you can get a brief explanation of them by clicking on the  next to the setting in question. However, since the format you choose for your course is very important we will spend a little time going over that setting.







When setting up your Moodle site, you have three formats from which to choose:

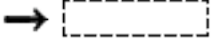




- The weekly format is suitable for courses that have a clear start date and activities are presented in weekly blocks. This is probably the most popular format for classes with a start and end date (such as we have during the semester).
- Topic formatted courses are actually presented in a similar way but with the dates removed so activities can belong to general or specific areas of study. This type of format could be used for either a class with a specific time frame or for a course with no specific time frame (such as a purely online, self-paced class)
- The social format doesn't use much content at all and is based around just one forum which is displayed on the main course page. This format might be useful for a non-academic bulletin board or if you just want a place to communicate with your students.

## **Editing your Moodle Site**

To add or alter activities or resources you will need to turn editing on. You can do this by pressing the button at the top right of the course homepage or following the turn editing on link in the administration block. You can turn editing off again by pressing the button or the admin block link again (now renamed turn editing off). This option is only available to teachers of the course who also have editing rights or to those users who are assigned site administration rights.

Moodle uses several icons that will clue you into various things you can do while editing your site. For some of these, it is apparent what they are used for – for others, it may not be. You will see these icons in the various blocks that make up the homepage of the Moodle course. The list below (adapted from [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher\\_documentation](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher_documentation)) should provide you with an overview of what these editing icons mean.

	The edit icon lets you alter/update whatever resource or activity it is next to.
	The help icon will popup a relevant help window.
	The open-eye icon means an item is visible to students. I will close when you click on it.
	The close-eye icon means an item is hidden from students. I will open when you click on it.
	The arrow icons are used to indent or outdent course elements.
	The move icon allows course element to be placed anywhere (for instance, if your have a course organized by weeks, you can move course

	elements to different weeks without having to recreate them).
	The move here icon appears when moving a course element.
	The delete icon will permanently delete something from the course, so be careful when you click on this.
	The marker icon allows you to make a section current.
	The one icon hides all other sections.
	The all icon redisplay all sections in a course.

## Blocks

Each site homepage generally contains blocks on the left and right with the center column containing the content for the site. After turning editing on, you can add, hide, delete and move the blocks. The standard blocks that come installed with Moodle include the following: [if you need more information about any of these types of block, please visit the Moodle Docs site -- <http://docs.moodle.org/en/Blocks> and click on Blocks (teacher)]


- **Activities** -- The Activities block lists and allows navigation between the different activities available in your course (forums, quizzes, assignments, etc.). The activities list will grow as you add activities to your course.
- **Administration** – Students cannot see this block as it contains functions accessible only by teachers and administrators. Students will have their own version of the block in order to access their gradebook and own course logs.
- **Calendar** – The calendar block displays site, course, group and user events.
- **Courses** – This block will display all the Moodle sites in which the user is a participant. This allows one-click access to another Moodle site homepage.
- **Course/Site Description** – This block provides a summary and/or description for the Moodle site. This displays the summary text of the course settings.
- **HTML** – This is a flexible block in which you can add additional text or images. You can either use the HTML editor to add content or add any valid HTML markup. This allows you to embed video, sounds, Flash, or other files that can enhance your site.
- **Latest News** – This displays recent posts made in the News forum.
- **Messages** – If you have received any messages, they will be displayed in this block.
- **Online Users** – This shows the users who have been logged into the current site for a period of time set by the site administrator (default is 5 minutes).
- **People** – This contains a link to a list of the course participants.
- **Quiz Results** – This block displays the highest and/or lowest grades achieved on a quiz within your site.
- **Random Glossary Entry** -- The random glossary block can be used to display random entries from a glossary, which usually take the form of dictionary style definitions. However the flexibility of Moodle's HTML editor allow users to adapt this block for other purposes such as 'Quote of the Day' or a random picture gallery that changes each time the page is refreshed.

- **Recent Activity** – The recent activity block shows everything that has happened in the site since the last time the viewer has logged on.
- **RSS Feeds** – This block enables RSS feeds from external websites to be displayed within Moodle. As the information on the other site is updated, the block will update to show the latest information.
- **Search Forums** – The Search Forum block allows you to search the course forums for a word or phrase. Type the word or phrase you want to find in the text field space.
- **Section Links** -- The Section Links block helps you quickly navigate to a particular topic/week section of the course (depending on whether the course uses either the "Topics" or "Weekly" format).
- **Upcoming Events** – The Upcoming Events block displays future events in a summarized list. The events are generated directly from the calendar.

In addition to these standard blocks, there are also several Non-standard block available for installation. These are listed at [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Non-standard\\_blocks](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Non-standard_blocks). Note, however that the installation of any of these blocks is at the discretion of Moodle administrators and that your request for a particular block installation may be denied if testing shows that the block is unstable or a security threat.

## ***Adding Content to Your Moodle Site***

The way you get information to and interact with your students is to add activities and/or resources to your site. It is important to understand the difference between an activity module and a resource. Activity modules are things like forums, Wikis, quizzes, etc. that you use to interact with your students. Resources are generally what you add when you are trying to convey information to your students by posting lecture notes, reading material, web site addresses, etc. to your course.

After turning editing on (see previous section) you will see two drop down menus in each section block of your site. When you want to add a resource or an activity to a block in your site, simply choose the appropriate resource or activity from the drop down menu. Also, in the previous section we looked at the  icon. Clicking on this provides you with context sensitive help. In this case, the help provides a brief explanation of the resources and activities that are available.



In our current Moodle installation, the following activities are available:

- Assignments
- Chats
- Choices
- Forums
- Glossary
- Journals (this may be replaced by assignments in the next Moodle version)
- Labels
- Lesson
- Quizzes
- SCORM Packages
- Surveys
- Wikis

- Workshops

Like the Moodle blocks, there are several non-standard modules that are available. You can find out more information about them at [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Non-standard\\_modules](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Non-standard_modules). Again, keep in mind that we may or may not install these, and at the very least it will be at least one semester before they are installed.

## ***Getting Help***

Help for Moodle beyond what this manual provides is available from a variety of sources:

- moodle.org
- Workshops (to see a schedule go to <https://www.atlas.uiuc.edu/teaching/moodle/>)
- consultation from the ATLAS Moodle service team (set up an appointment by E-mailing [atlas-tlt@uiuc.edu](mailto:atlas-tlt@uiuc.edu))
- E-mail your questions to [atlas-tlt@uiuc.edu](mailto:atlas-tlt@uiuc.edu)
- Moodle Wiki