Getting Started in Moodle (Staff Guide)

Are you ready to get started with Moodle?

This tutorial will help you to locate Moodle easily via Brookes webpages, help you to build your courses, and give you some highlights.

You can start these tutorials anywhere and stop and restart anytime.

Why do I need to use Moodle?

Moodle is the Brookes' Virtual Learning Environment, or VLE, and students will use Moodle regularly to access their course resources and submit assignments.

For your modules, students will expect to use Moodle to access to their reading list, module handbook, and much of their course content, and to use Moodle to complete their assessments.

You can also create discussion forums to encourage participation, or use Moodle tools to build interactive activities for students to complete online.

You should aim to describe your module's Moodle course in detail during the first few weeks of each term.

Do note that there are many different ways to format your course, based on what type of module you are running, and some faculties have a central format that they ask you to use.

You should contact your programme lead or Faculty DMeLD if you have any questions.

Where is Moodle?

Moodle is accessed via the main Brookes staff page or you can access Moodle directly via http://moodle.brookes.ac.uk/.

First, go to brookes.ac.uk and click 'Staff' in the top right corner of the screen.

Select 'Virtual Gateway for Staff.'

The sections on the Staff Virtual Gateway have many useful support links, including links:

to Digital Services, Faculty Support, and the Digital Capabilities support pages,

to Talis Aspire to build your Reading Lists,

to Google Apps,

and to RADAR, Brookes' institutional repository containing original research publications and teaching resources.

Bookmark this page for later use.

In the top right of the header, click 'Moodle login', located in a pink box.

On the Moodle Login page, enter your Brookes staff number and password.

Click 'Log in'

Okay, I'm logged-in...now what?

This is your default Moodle Dashboard.

Your Moodle courses are displayed in 'Course Overview.'

You can navigate between courses using the Navigation block in the left column.

There are several other blocks in the right column, including links to your Academic Advisees, your calendar, and the Library.

The dashboard is a flexible resource that is customisable.

It will show you your current courses and for your students it will highlight any assignments that they have due based on set due dates.

If your modules are not visible for the current term, then they may not have been populated through PIP or you may not be listed as a Module Leader for that course.

Alternatively, your Module Leader may not yet have added you to the course as a co-teacher.

What will my Moodle course look like?

Select the Moodle course you would like to view by clicking on its title.

There is quite a lot of variety in how you can lay out your Moodle course.

Yet, there are some standard features.

Moodle courses are generally displayed in 2 or 3 columns.

The main column (shown here in the centre) contains all course activities and resources.

Most blocks contain further course information or university-wide information and links.

In the right column, you can add a block for our contact details, add the course calendar, or add a block with links to all course activities.

In the left column you will generally find the navigation block. You can use this block to switch between courses and to return to your dashboard.

Some faculties may have additional blocks in the left column that link to further resources, or these may be docked along the left edge of your screen.

Faculty-specific blocks are added to your courses at the programme level and cannot be changed.

How do I move blocks?

You can move, hide, and dock any blocks on your Moodle courses and on your Dashboard.

Most blocks contain further course information or university-wide information and links.

To start, select 'Turn Editing On' on the top right of your screen in a Moodle course or 'Customise this page' on your dashboard.

To collapse, or 'hide,' any block, click the 'up' arrow in the top right corner of the block.

The title of the block will be all that is displayed.

To reverse this, click the 'down' arrow in the top right corner of the block.

To expand your view of the centre column, try docking blocks you use less often.

You can dock any block by clicking the 'left' arrow in the top right corner of the block.

You do not need to collapse the block first.

All blocks can be 'docked' along the edge of your screen.

Note: If you 'dock' too many blocks you may not be able to find important information when you need it.

To move blocks, click the Move button (two interlocking arrows) on the right side, just below the 'hide' and 'dock' buttons.

Once clicked, all of the areas where you can move the block are highlighted in blue with a dashed outline.

You cannot 'drag-and-drop' the block.

Locate where you would like the new block to go, and click the appropriate rectangle.

The block will appear in the new area, and the outlines will disappear.

When you are satisfied with your changes, click 'Turn Editing Off' in a Moodle course or 'Stop Customising this page' on your Dashboard to save.

How do I add and edit blocks?

While you cannot change the content for some blocks, you can add new blocks.

To start, select 'Turn Editing on' on the top right of your screen in a Moodle course or 'Customise this page' on your dashboard.

First locate 'Add a Block' on the bottom left of your screen, it will be the last block in the left column.

Click the down-arrow after 'Add...'

Select the block you would like to add and click its title.

The new block is added to the left column, just above 'Add a block'.

To move blocks, click the Move button (two interlocking arrows) on the right side, just below the 'hide' and 'dock' buttons.

Once clicked, all of the areas where you can move the block are highlighted in blue with a dashed outline.

You cannot 'drag-and-drop' the block.

Locate where you would like the new block to go, and click the appropriate rectangle.

The block will then appear in the new area, and the outlines will disappear.

To edit the content of a block, click 'Settings' (The icon is a cog-wheel) in the top left corner of the block.

Any configuration and content settings that you can change will then be displayed.

To save and return to the main screen, click 'Save changes'

When you are satisfied with all of your changes, click 'Turn Editing off' in a Moodle course or 'Stop Customising this page' on your Dashboard to save.

Which blocks should I add?

Course Overview Enhanced

On your Dashboard, Moodle has integrated a new 'Course Overview' block.

This block includes your current and former courses with new space for further information, such as upcoming deadlines.

Yet, if you have a long list of courses, you may want to add the 'Course Overview on Campus Block' which is more streamlined.

A good place to put this block is either above or below the current 'Course Overview' in the centre column.

HTML

The HTML block provides you with an empty block for your own content.

You can use this block to include your contact details, images, videos, and links to important information.

You can also use the HTML block to create a 'Course at a Glance' block.

Activities

The activities block solves issues that students have reported regarding finding their dropboxes and other activities by placing them all in one convenient, easy to find location.

Accessibility

With the accessibility block you can change how your Moodle looks and launch the Assistive Technology bar.

Using the block, you can make changes to the font size and some colour changes.

For more complicated changes to your Moodle settings, 'Launch the AT Bar' by clicking the white space bar below the eight main buttons.

To 'revert' back to the default Moodle settings, click the 'R' button. (The first button in the second row.)

Once you are satisfied, click the 'Save Setting' button. (The fourth button in the top row.)

I'm done editing the course content for now, so how do I finish setting the course up?

You can always come back to editing your course, but before Week 1 you need to set your course start date and course visibility.

The majority of undergraduate modules are linked to PIP and sync automatically.

Therefore, for most courses your course dates, course name, and more are set based on the records in PIP.

In other courses, you will need to set course dates and other information manually.

One way to tell the difference is based on enrolment.

If you are enrolling students yourself, or if students are responsible for self-enrolment, you will most likely need to make some changes.

For all of your courses, you will be responsible for making the course visible to students.

To make changes to these settings, you will need to:

Log in to Moodle

Click on the Moodle course you want to double-check the settings of.

Go the Administration Block.

This block is located below the Navigation block on the left side of your screen.

Under 'Course Administration,' Click 'Edit Settings'

There are several settings you should not change, including the course name, course short name, course category, and course ID number.

These names connect your course to other platforms and tools..

Many of the rest of these settings can be changed.

There are separate tutorials available that will help guide you in choosing a course format and setting up groups.

1. How do I change the Course Start Date?

Click on the Moodle course you want to double-check the settings of.

Go the Administration Block.

This block is located below the Navigation block on the left side of your screen.

Under 'Course Administration,' Click 'Edit Settings'

The start date for the course should be set for the first day of the first week of term.

If you are using a Weekly course format, each week's dates are determined by the Course Start Date.

If the Course Start Date is not set for Week 1, students may not have access to their materials on time.

The change these dates, under 'Course start date' click the calendar icon to the left of the year.

Scroll through the months using the arrows on either side of the block

Click the date you want.

The new date will update the Day/Month/Year fields.

You can also change the 'Course end date,' which ideally should be one week after the final week of the module.

To save your changes, click 'Save and Display'

2. How do I make my Moodle course visible to students?

By default, your courses are set to be hidden from students.

If your course is hidden, the title of the course in the Course Overview block is grey.

To make you course visible to students,

Click on the Moodle course you want to make changes to.

Go the Administration Block.

This block is located below the Navigation block on the left side of your screen.

Under 'Course Administration,' Click 'Edit Settings'

Course visibility will be set to 'Hide'

Click the down arrow and Select 'Show'

To save your changes, click 'Save and Display'

Use the breadcrumbs at the top of the screen to return to your Dashboard.

The title of the Moodle course is now shown as a blue working link and is visible to students.

3. How do I see what my students are seeing on my Moodle course?

The student-view of your course can often be quite different than your own view.

This is especially true if you want to hide sections/tabs from students for administrative purposes,

or hide assignment dropboxes until closer to the due dates,

or if you want to use restrictions to release materials to students on different dates.

To check the student-view you will need to switch into a student role.

This is quite easily and quickly done.

At the top right of your screen, click the down arrow next to your name.

Select the last option, 'Switch role to...' (The icon is a grey person.)

This is the list of user roles you can temporarily switch into.

Click 'Student'

You will now be temporarily switched into a student's role for your Moodle course.

The role you've switched into will be listed below your name in the top right corner of the screen.

Note: This will not be a 100% perfect view as you will not have submitted work and will not have any grades to view.

When you are ready to return to your own role,

Click the down arrow beside your name.

Select 'Return to my normal role' (The icon is an arrow pointing out from a box.)