Getting Started

An introductory guide for Moodle Teachers

Aimed at new users, this guide covers some of the basic functions such as navigation and file management.

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this guide is to provide a brief overview of some of the basic functions and processes that are likely to be required by a Moodle Teacher upon logging in for the first time. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive break down of the available features, however.

> **NB:** A summary of key activities can be found in section 7.2 of this document.
>
> Detailed guidance regarding individual activity or resource types can be obtained by contacting the Technology Enhanced Learning Team (via e-learning@bath.ac.uk).

1.1 WHAT IS MOODLE?

Moodle is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is essentially a website that facilitates the delivery of content and activities to students, through the provision of a range of built in tools and functions.

Moodle can be used to deliver anything from a wholly online course (pure e-learning) through to one that supports aspects of traditional, face-to-face interaction (blended learning).

Whilst Moodle is commonly used to provide students with access to content, it can also facilitate the creation of collaborative learning communities around specific subject areas. One of its greatest strengths is the ease with which it can support a more active approach to learning through the use of forums, wikis, quizzes etc.

2 MOODLE BASICS

2.1 LOGGING IN

Anyone with a Bath username and password will be able to log into Moodle. There are caveats to this, however; for example students who have not yet paid their fees, or who are not yet fully registered etc. will not be able to access the system.

Moodle can be found at: https://moodle.bath.ac.uk

Upon navigating to this page, you will be prompted for your username and password

NB: If you (or your students) are unable to log into Moodle, a support request should be sent to Computing Services via their web form (located at: https://bath.topdesk.net/tas/public)

2.2 SITE LAYOUT

There are three main page types in Moodle:

- The **Home** Page
- The **Dashboard** Page
- Individual **Course** Pages

Upon successfully logging into Moodle, you will see the **Home** page:

User settings: Click to update and manage your personal profile and user preferences.

Menu bar: Provides easy access to a variety of helpful links

Blocks: The most commonly used blocks are the **Navigation** and **Administration** blocks

Course / Content Area: Displays links to your courses and (when in a course), its activities and resources

2.2.1 BLOCKS

Moodle **Blocks** appear at the sides of the content area and can be customised in a range of ways (depending on what each block is designed to do). They can be added, removed, relocated or 'docked' at the side of your screen (in order to expand the size of the course area).

The blocks on the Home page are customisable only by Moodle Administrators; whilst the blocks that appear within individual courses are fully customisable by anyone with Teacher permissions in that course.

In contrast, blocks found on the dashboard or on individual course pages, can be customised by anyone with appropriate permissions.

Perhaps the most important blocks in Moodle are the Navigation block and the Administration block.

NAVIGATION BLOCK

The **Navigation Block** will appear on every Moodle page (although its location may differ). It contains 4 main links that refer to different parts of Moodle:

1. **Home** –Links to the Moodle front page that displays after logging on

2. **Dashboard** – Links to a personal, customisable version of the Home page
3. **Site pages** – Contains links to items with site wide (rather than course specific) relevance
4. **My courses** – Used to navigate between courses and the resources and activities located in them.
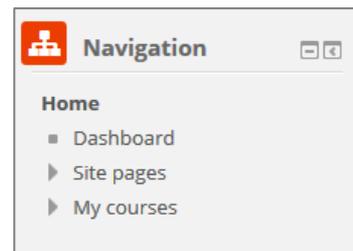
ADMINISTRATION BLOCK

The **Administration Block** will appear throughout your course in order to facilitate access to a number of different functions and settings. The important thing to remember however, is that this block is context sensitive (so it will have different options in it depending on where you are within the Moodle site).

For example:

When in a Moodle **Course**, those with Teacher permissions will be able to customise all aspects of it, and the Administration block will adjust accordingly to allow access to these additional features (as shown in the following image).
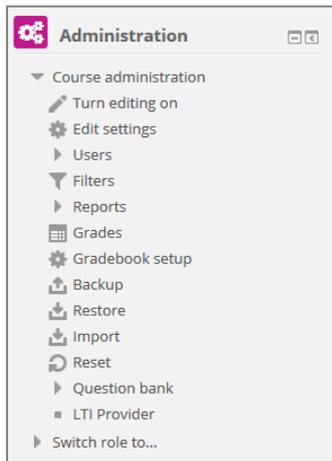
In contrast, if a Teacher has clicked on an activity or resource within a course, the **Administration** block will also contain settings specific to the management of the activity or resource. In this example, the additional (highlighted) settings apply to a Moodle assignment activity.
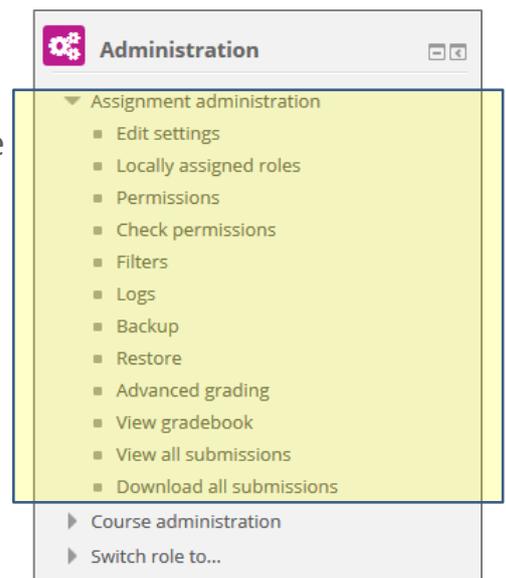
2.2.2   MANAGING BLOCKS

The way in which a Moodle course looks, feels and acts can be influenced by the range of blocks that are in use. There are a wide range of blocks available, and the Moodle Teacher can add, remove or relocate them as necessary.

Moodle users without Teacher permissions can make minor changes to the way in which the blocks are displayed (based on their individual preferences), but they won't be able to add, remove or relocate them.

ADDING BLOCKS

Only someone with Teacher permissions within a given course can add additional blocks to it:

- In the **Administration** block (see section 2.2.1), locate and enable the **Turn editing on** function
- The **Add a block** block (shown below) will open on the right hand side of the screen
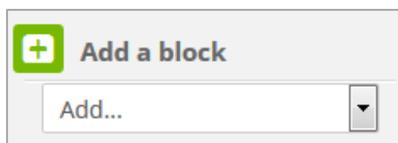
- Press the downward pointing arrow to see a list of the available blocks within a drop down menu
- Select preferred block from the drop down menu (repeat as required)

REMOVING BLOCKS

The Navigation and Administration blocks are a requirement in any course, so these cannot be deleted, however any of the other blocks within a Moodle course can be removed by someone with Teacher permissions.

- In the **Administration** block (see section 2.2.1), locate and enable the **Turn editing on** function
  In doing so, icons will appear on the right hand corner of each block

- Press the **Actions** icon ⚙▾ on the relevant block and select the delete option

MOVING BLOCKS

Only someone with Teacher permissions in a Moodle course can move blocks:

- In the **Administration** block, locate and enable the **Turn editing on** function
  In doing so, icons will appear on the right hand corner of each block
- Click the **Move** icon ✛ on the relevant block and drag it to its new location

> NB: An alternative approach is to single click onto a blocks **Move** icon. This will open a pop-up window containing a list of potential locations. Simply click onto one of these in order to move your block accordingly.

COLLAPSING/EXPANDING BLOCKS

The contents of a Moodle block can sometimes cause it to take up significant vertical space. Where this is the case, individual users (regardless of their role within a course) may wish to collapse blocks in order to reduce the appearance of a 'cluttered' site.

- In the relevant block, identify and click on the **Collapse** icon ▭
  All text in the block will disappear with the exception of the block name

> NB: If a block has been collapsed, it will display the **Expand** icon ⊞. This icon will restore the block to its original size.

DOCKING BLOCKS

Docking is a process by which you can reduce the amount of space taken up by blocks by moving them to the left hand side of your screen. From here, they can be accessed via a tab-like format.

- To dock a block, click on the **docking icon** that appears in the top right hand corner of the block ⊡

  The block will be relocated on the left hand side of the screen (as a tab)

- Move the mouse pointer over the a docked block to expand it (as in the image below)
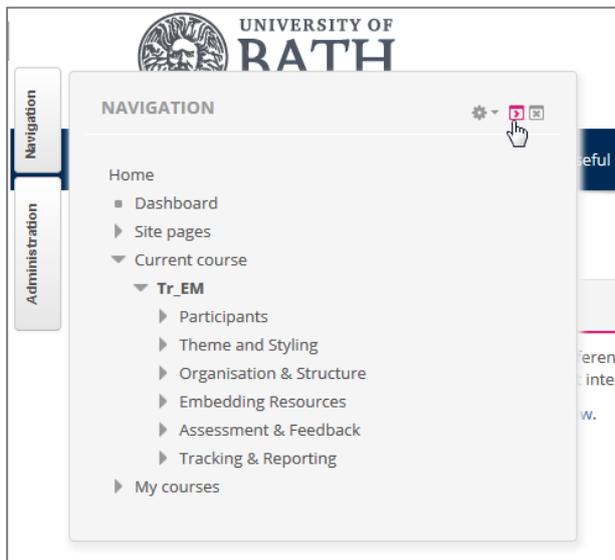
Each docked block will feature an undock icon ⊡ . Undocking blocks will return them back to their previous location.

> **NB:** There will also be an undock icon at the bottom of the series of docked blocks. This icon will undock all blocks at the same time.

3 NAVIGATION

There are a number of ways that you can move around your Moodle sites, depending upon your preference.
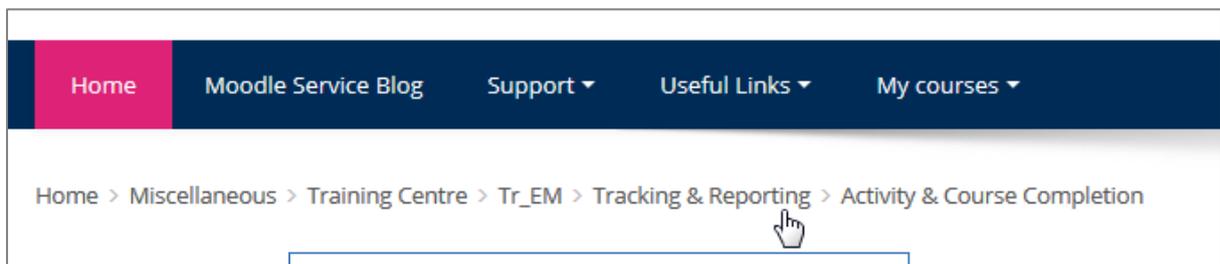
3.1 USING THE HOME PAGE/COURSE AREA

The most commonly used method of navigating around Moodle is via a combination of the links that appear on the **Home page** or **course area** and the **breadcrumbs** (also known as the navigation bar).

After logging on to Moodle, the **Home page** will display a list of those courses that you have permission to access.

You can navigate to any of these courses simply by clicking onto their title, at which point, any content or activities relating to that space will be displayed in the **course area** instead. By continuing to click on relevant links, you can access specific course materials and activities.
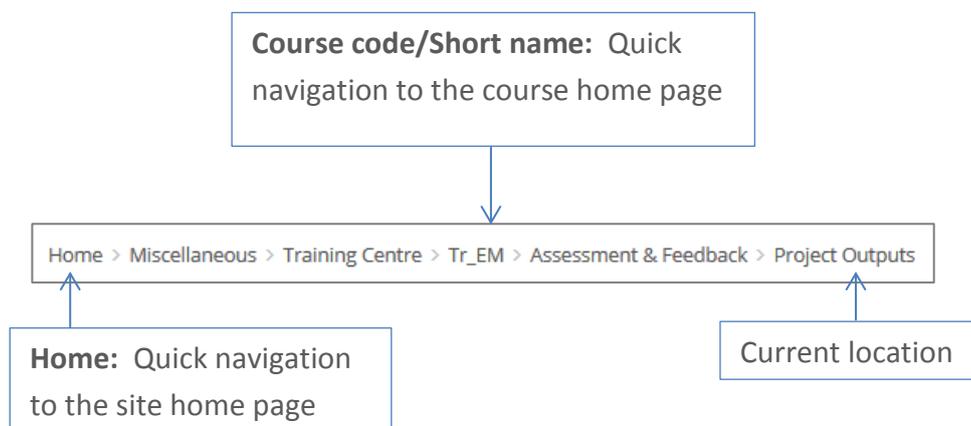
3.2 USING THE BREADCRUMBS

The breadcrumbs (which will display those pages that are related to your current location), can be used to navigate back to previous pages or activities you may have passed through, or to quickly return to the site **Home** page or the front page of whatever course you are currently viewing.

In the example below, the active resource (that is, the one that has been selected) is a folder called 'Project Outputs' (which is located within in a topic entitled Assessment & Feedback).

To navigate rapidly back to the front page of the course, you could click on its code/short name (shown below). To navigate back to the Moodle Home page, you can simply click on the **Home** link.

Course code/Short name: Quick navigation to the course home page

Home > Miscellaneous > Training Centre > Tr_EM > Assessment & Feedback > Project Outputs

Home: Quick navigation to the site home page

Current location

NB: It recommended that you avoid using your browser to navigate 'back' to previous pages, as this will not always have the desired effect, and may cause unexpected errors.

3.3 USING THE NAVIGATION BLOCK

The navigation block provides the user with links to a range of different locations (as mentioned previously in Section 2.2.1). Not only does it provide a direct link to the Moodle **Home** page, but it also provides direct access to individual courses and to the content and activities within them.

- In the **Navigation** block, look for the **My courses** link
- Click onto My courses to expand this section
  (this will display links to any of the courses that you have access to)
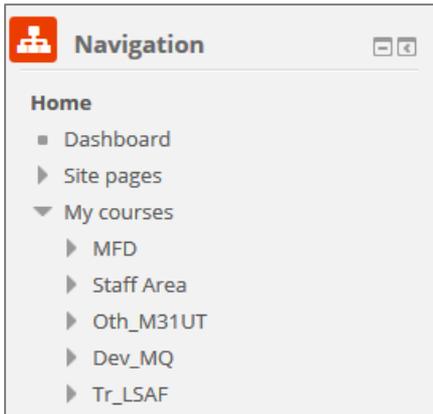
NB: Arrow icons that point to the right indicate that this item can be further expanded. You can either click onto a course link, or you can expand that item still further in order to go directly to a specific resource or activity.

Since the **Navigation** block appears throughout Moodle, this navigation method enables you to move rapidly between courses, content and resources from anywhere in the site.

4 MANAGING COURSES

The majority of Moodle courses are created and populated automatically following a synchronisation between Moodle and SAMIS. The synchronisation takes place on a nightly basis during the working week, though it can also be invoked by Moodle Teachers 'on demand'.

Course creation and enrolments are designed to occur shortly before the start of the teaching period (normally 3 weeks before the period is due to begin), and since the enrolment data is drawn from SAMIS it is important that this data is as accurate as possible (containing both the student details and the correct Module Tutor).

> **NB:** If you are teaching on a SAMIS coded unit but do not have access to a corresponding Moodle course, you should check that you are listed as the Module Tutor on the unit (units with no Module Tutor are not created automatically), and that the teaching period is imminent.
>
> If you require access to a course far in advance of the teaching period, or you need any other (non-SAMIS) course spaces to be created, you should contact the TEL Team who will be able to assist.

All new Moodle courses are 'hidden' from students by default. This means that students are not unnecessarily exposed to empty courses or courses that are 'under construction'.

Hidden courses will still appear on the Home page of the Moodle Teacher; however the course titles will be displayed in grey text rather than black (indicating that students are not able to view them).

4.1 COURSE AVAILABILITY

To make a course available/unavailable to students:

- Navigate to the relevant course
- In the **Administration block**, click onto the **Edit Settings** link
  (as highlighted below)
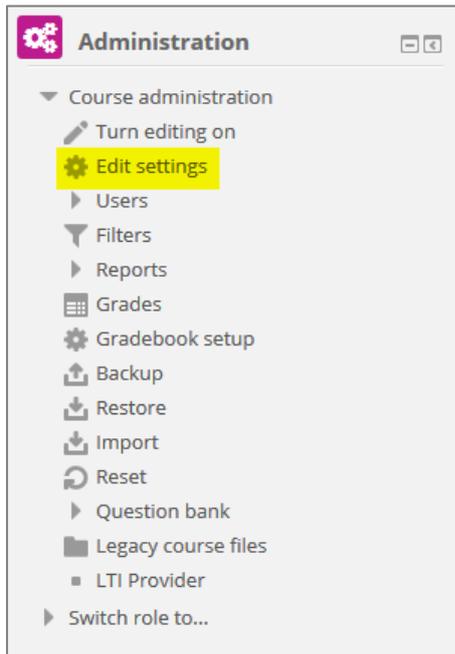
The **Edit course settings** page appears
- Locate the section entitled **General**
- Modify the visibility setting as necessary
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page and press the **Save changes** button
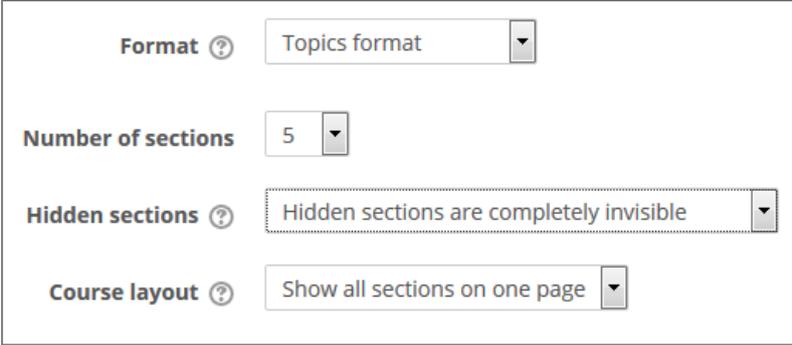
4.2 COURSE FORMAT

When viewing a Moodle course, the content and resources will be displayed in the main course area.

There are several ways of presenting this material, however the two most commonly used approaches are to group teaching materials by either topic or by week.

To specify a course format:

- From within the relevant course, locate the **Administration block**
- Click on the **Edit settings** link
- Locate the **Course format** settings
  (as shown below)

Format ⑦	Topics format ▾
Number of sections	5 ▾
Hidden sections ⑦	Hidden sections are completely invisible ▾
Course layout ⑦	Show all sections on one page ▾

If you want to group content and resources by date, you should choose a **Weekly format** and should also specify an appropriate number of sections (weeks). If you prefer to group your materials by topic then you should select **Topic** format from the drop down list instead.

- Make the required changes
- Scroll down and press the **Save changes** button

NB: If you select a weekly format, Moodle will create sections for you incrementally. The first date used will be the one listed as the **Course start date** (located within the **General** section).

Should you wish to skip a week (in the event that teaching did not take place); you will need to hide the topic manually (as described in Section 4.4).

The **Navigation block** will reflect whatever format you have chosen.

4.3 NAMING TOPICS

If you have chosen a topic based format for your course, the navigation block will reference each one numerically, however it is possible to give topics more meaningful titles. As the structure of a course is reflected in the navigation block, these titles not only provide useful 'sign-posting' to users of the course, but also improve the clarity of structure.

- From within the relevant course, locate the **Administration block**
- Click onto the **Turn editing on** link

When 'editing' is turned on in a course, a number of additional icons appear throughout your course. The **Edit** link that appears in the upper right hand corner of each topic box (as highlighted below) enables you to modify the label associated with each topic.
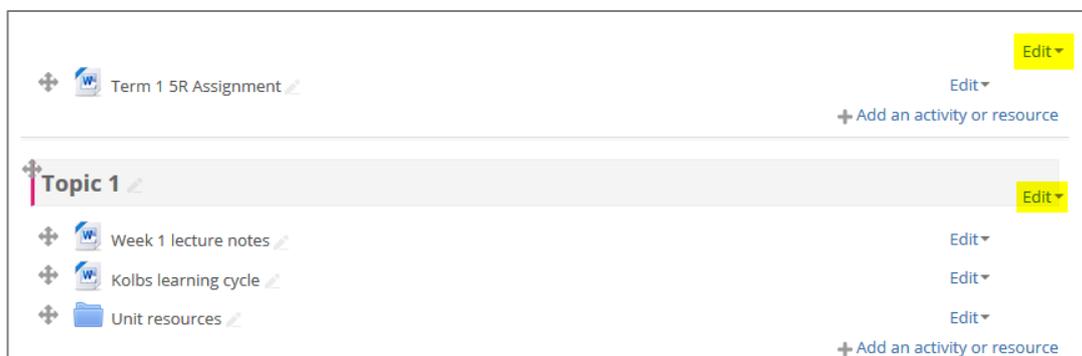
To modify a topic label:
- Click onto the Edit link associated with the topic you wish to update and select **Edit section**
  (The topic summary screen will appear)
- Uncheck the **Use default section name** option
- Enter your own **Section name** and (if desirable) a summary description

It is also possible to rename topic headings by clicking on the pencil icon that appears next to the current title (though descriptions cannot be added in this way)


> **NB:** User defined section headings should be meaningful. Not only will they appear at the top of the topic box, but they will also appear in the navigation block (for both students and teachers).
>
> Summary descriptions can contain a range of media including text, multimedia resources and equations.

4.4 MODIFYING TOPIC/WEEK VISIBILITY

If a course is in 'edit' mode, each box for a topic/week will have an Edit link in its top right hand corner. Clicking on to this link will reveal a menu of options, including one that will enable you to hide the entire topic from the students.
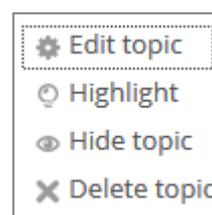
If the topic is hidden from students, it will be displayed in a paler colour (to those with Teacher access). To unhide a topic, simply click on to the **Edit** link again to select the **Unhide topic** option.

4.5 ADDING A COURSE DESCRIPTION

Given the large number of courses that exist in Moodle, it can be helpful to include a short description of each one in order to provide added clarity as to the context in which the course sits.

- From within the relevant course, locate the **Administration block**
- Click on the **Edit settings** link
- Locate the **Description** settings
- In the **Course summary** section, add your description
- Scroll down and press the **Save changes** button

5 COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Moodle can support the learning and teaching experience through the provision of a wide range of tools. These facilitate resource delivery and access to a range of online activities and (where used appropriately), can help the Moodle Teacher to construct an exciting and dynamic learning environment for their students.

For the purposes of this introductory guide, we shall focus on the two most heavily used features in Moodle. There is however a much wider range of functions available and you may wish to explore these at a later date.

- Files
- Folders

5.1 CONTENT DELIVERY

Anyone with Teacher permissions to a Moodle course will be able to upload content to it. Content commonly ranges from documents and web links, through to audio or visual materials.

UPLOADING FILES

- From the relevant course, locate the **Administration** block and **Turn editing on**
  *Within each topic or week, the **Add an activity or resource** link appears*
- Click on the link to open the **Activity chooser** and to view the options
- Select **File** and press the **Add** button

The page that opens contains a number of settings. For the purposes of this guide, the common settings will be covered.

- Enter a **Name** for the file
  This is the text that will be displayed to students within the course area
- Press the **Add…** button ⧉ (located in the **Content** section)

The **File picker** opens (as shown below):
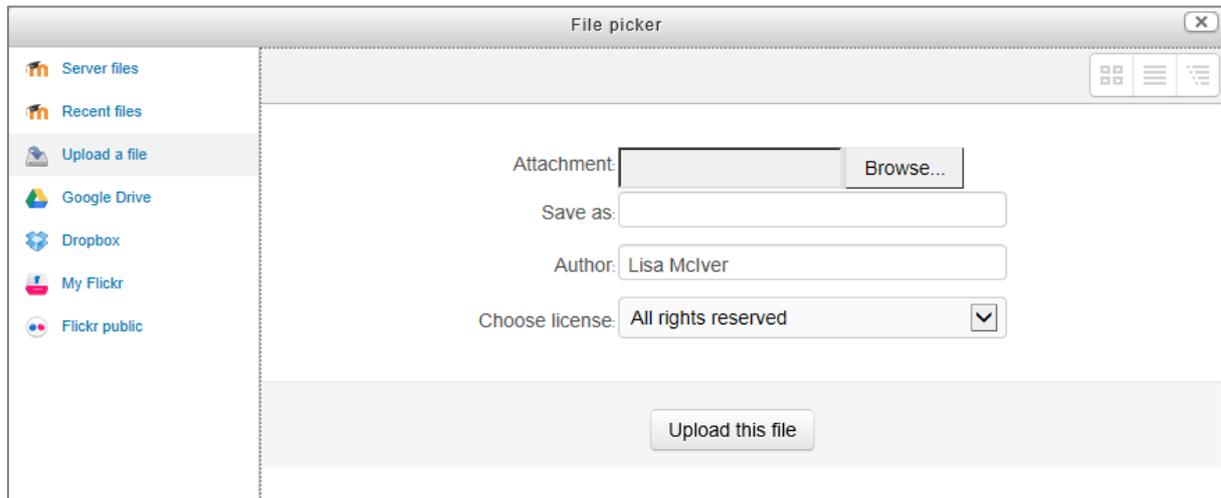
- With the **Upload a file** option selected (as is the default), attach the relevant file by pressing the **Browse…** button
- If you want to rename the file, you can enter your preferred title in the **Save as** box
- Specify **Author** and **Choose license** (as appropriate)

NB: For more information about the range of license types, see Appendix 1

- Press the **Upload this file** button
- Scroll down the page and press the **Save and return to course** button

NB: As a general rule, it is not necessary to know what each resource or activity setting does, however most settings in Moodle will be accompanied by a help icon ⓘ. Clicking on the help icon will open up context sensitive assistance which may be useful for those wishing to explore additional settings.

Another way to upload a file to your course is simply to drag the file onto the content area of your course whilst you have editing turned on. The success of this method is dependent upon having a browser that supports drag and drop functionality (and as such, this does not work in IE9 or below).

DELETING FILES

If a file has been uploaded in error, or perhaps if a new version of the file has been created, it may be necessary to delete the original.

- From the relevant course, **Turn editing on**
- In the **Course area**, identify the resource that needs to be updated
- Press the relevant **Edit** link and select **Edit settings**
- The upload file page appears. In the **Content** section, locate the file you wish to remove and click on it
- A pop-up window will appear. Press the **Delete** button

Once the file has been deleted, it may be replaced by pressing the **Add…** button and following the steps as described previously.

NB: Sometimes it may be preferable to delete an entire resource (including its settings / descriptive text etc.). Where this is the case, simply **Turn editing on** within the course and press the relevant **Edit** link before choosing the **Delete** option.

CREATING FOLDERS

The more files that are uploaded to a Moodle course, the further a user may need to scroll vertically. In some instances it may be preferable to organise related materials within a folder in order to reduce clutter on the page and to make it easier to navigate.

The process for creating a folder is similar to that for uploading a file.

- From the relevant course, **Turn editing on**
- Select **Folder** from the **Activity chooser** and press the Add button
- Enter a **Name** for your folder
  This is the name that will be displayed to students within the course area
- Press the **Add…** button (located in the **Content** section) to upload files to the folder

- With the **Upload a file** option selected, attach the relevant file by pressing the **Browse…** button and locating the relevant file
- Press the **Upload this file** button
  Repeat the last three steps (as necessary), until all the relevant files have been added
- Scroll down the page and press the **Save and return to course** button

6 ADDING COURSE PARTICIPANTS

There are a number of ways that students can be added to a Moodle course, and their method of enrolment will determine whether or not they will be removed automatically at the end of the academic period.

If a user was brought through into a Moodle course automatically (via links with SAMIS), they will generally be removed automatically. There are caveats to this however, as it is possible for Moodle Teachers to override the default un-enrolment criteria (either nominating a specified un-enrolment date, or specifying that un-enrolment will take place manually at an undefined time).

6.1 ADDING SAMIS COHORTS

Moodle courses synchronise with SAMIS on a nightly basis. For Moodle courses that reflect those listed in SAMIS, this ensures that (where a course's academic period is defined as current), its participant memberships are regularly updated in Moodle.
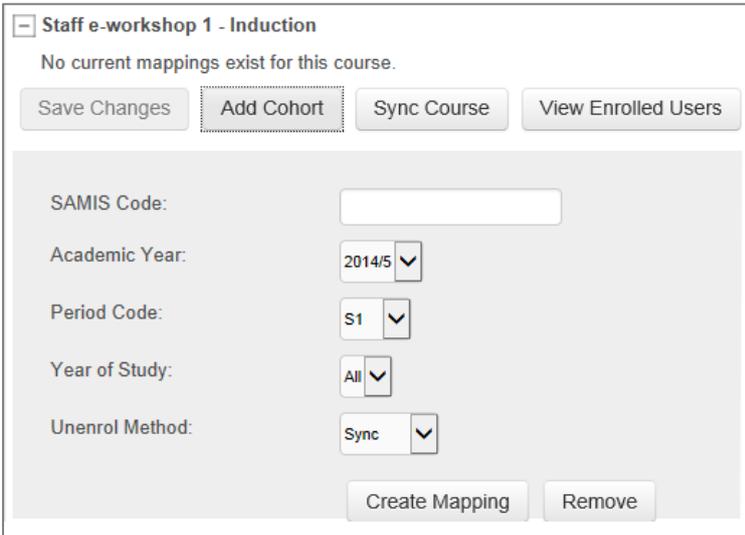
For the majority of Moodle Teachers, this will mean that nothing needs to be done in order to add the students to a Moodle course. However, in some instances, staff will have chosen to teach more than one SAMIS cohort in the same Moodle space. Where this is the case, the **SAMIS Integration block** will need to be used to add links to the additional cohorts (these will not come through automatically until this has been done).

To add multiple SAMIS cohorts to a Moodle course (or to link a non-SAMIS coded course with a SAMIS cohort in order to populate it with users):

- Locate the **SAMIS Integration block**
  *(if it is not enabled, it can be enabled via the **Add a block** block – see Section 2.2.2)*
- From the SAMIS Integration block, press the **Manage Mappings** link

At this point, a new window will open up. This window will display a list of all of the courses that you have Teacher access to. Identify the course to which you wish to add additional cohorts, and expand the reference to it by pressing the expand icon ⊞

- Press the **Add cohort** button
  (the following options will display)

- Enter the relevant cohort details (including your preferred un-enrolment method)
- Press the **Create Mapping** button
- Repeat the process to add more than one user defined mapping
- To synchronise the course with SAMIS immediately, press the **Sync Course** button

NB: To view all enrolled users (including their un-enrolment conditions); press the **View Enrolled Users** button.

6.2 MANUAL ENROLMENTS

ADDING USERS MANUALLY

Whilst the majority of course enrolments will take place automatically, there will be times when it is necessary to add a user to a course manually. Anyone with Teacher permissions on a given course will be able to do this.

Method 1

- Locate the **Administration** block within your course
- Press the **Users** link and then the **Enrolled users** option
- Press the **Enrol users** button
  (an Enrol Users popup screen appears)
- Select the role (e.g. Teacher / Student) that you wish to assign to the user
- Enter the users name (either in full or in part) and press the **Search** button
- Users found to match your search criteria will be displayed below it. Press the **Enrol** button that is associated with the user you wish to add
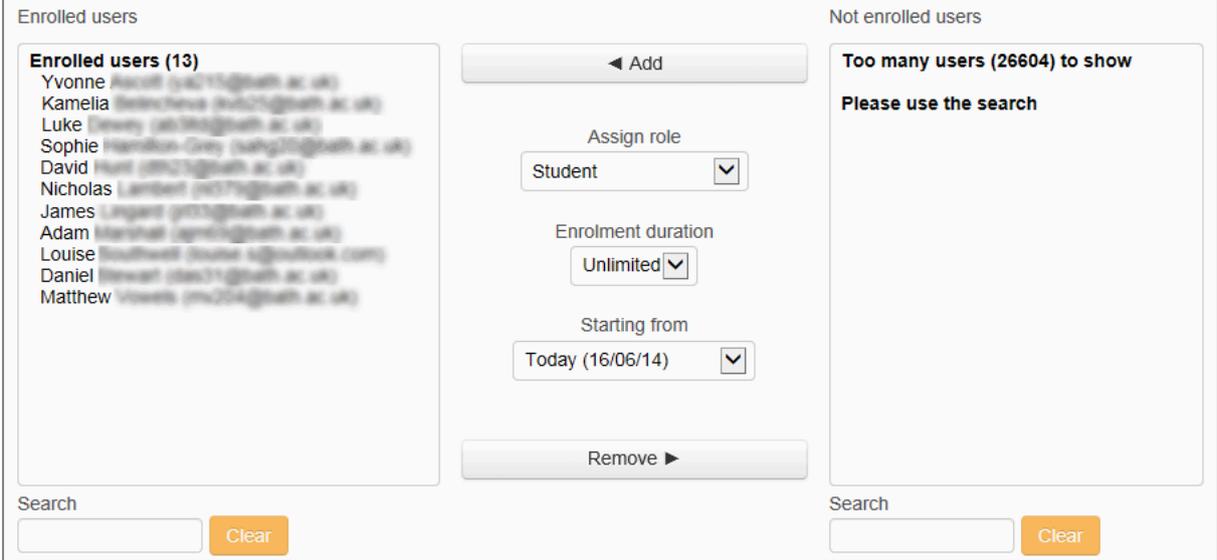- Press the **Finish enrolling users** button.

Method 2

- Locate the **Administration** block within your course
- Press the **Users** link and then the **Enrolment Methods** link
  (the enrolment methods screen opens – as shown below)

Name	Users	Up/Down	Edit
Manual enrolments	30	↓	✕ 👁 👤₊ ⚙
Self enrolment (Student)	8	↑	✕ 👁 ⚙

The number of users enrolled via a specific enrolment method will be displayed, alongside a range of icons

- Select the **Enrol users** icon adjacent to the manual enrolment method *(the enrol users screen displays – as shown below)*

- In the **Search** box on the right hand side, enter the name of the person you want to add.
  (Moodle will display any users that match your search criteria)
- Select the relevant name from the list of suggested users
- Check that the **Assign role** setting displays the required role (modifying if necessary)
- Press the **Add** button
  (The users name will move to the left hand side of the screen, indicating that they have been added to the course).

REMOVING MANUALLY CREATED USERS

The main cause of student enrolments persisting across multiple academic periods is generally due to the existence of manual enrolments. Manual enrolments override all other types of enrolments – if a user is added manually, they will need to be removed manually.

> **NB:** If a user was added to a course in any other way than through the Moodle-SAMIS integration, they are considered a 'manual' enrolment and will need to be removed manually. This includes those who used an enrolment key to gain access to the course, those who were added through the **Assign Roles** function and (very rarely) those who were bulk uploaded by the e-Learning Team.

Method 1
- Locate the **Administration** block within your course
- Press the **Users** link and then the **Enrolled users** option
  (course participants are displayed in table format)
- Click the **Unenrol** icon ✖ (located in the **Enrolment methods** column) for user to be removed
- Press the **Continue** button

Method 2
- Locate the **Administration** block within your course
- Press the **Users** link and then the **Enrolment Methods** link
- Select the **Enrol users** icon 👤 adjacent to the relevant enrolment method
- Select all of the enrolled users that you wish to remove
- Press the **Remove** button

NB: Since the Self enrolment method involves a manual process, any users added in this way will also need to be removed manually.

Additionally; you should be aware that users added automatically via the Moodle-SAMIS integration, will be recreated (following the next synchronisation with SAMIS) if they are deleted whilst the period slot code is still active.

7 APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX 1

7.1.1 CHOOSING A LICENCE FOR YOUR UPLOADED FILE

When you use the File picker to add a file to your Moodle unit, one of the options you need to fill in is the **Choose licence** drop down list. Moodle will then hold details of the licence with that file when it is uploaded. This licence will let other Moodle users know what they are allowed to do with the file.

By default the file will be uploaded as **All rights reserved**. This means that the file cannot be copied, altered, reused without the permission of the copyright owner.

Choose **Public domain** only if you are sure that the file is out of copyright/freely available for public use. This does not just mean that it can be freely and easily found on the internet, as most materials on the internet are under copyright unless clearly marked otherwise.

Most often, public domain applies to materials where the copyright has lapsed due to the length of time since they were created (e.g. old photos). You will sometimes find that files are being released on the internet as public domain on the internet (e.g. in Wiki commons) because the creator wants to expressly state that they are happy for them to be reused without any restrictions.

Choose **Creative Commons** if you are aware that the materials have this licence type - they are usually clearly marked with a logo. A Creative Commons licence allows the copyright holder to easily and clearly explain what permissions are in place for the reuse of the materials (e.g. if it can be altered, used commercially, if it has to be attributed). To find out more about the Creative Commons licence types see the following website:

http://creativecommons.org/licenses/

NB: If you have created materials as part of your work at the University, be clear about whether or not you own the copyright in them. If you are not the

copyright owner then you cannot give public domain/creative commons or other permission to use them. Whether or not you are the copyright owner of materials created as part of your job depends on the type of role you have at the University.

7.2 Appendix 2

7.2.1 Summary of key icons and functions

Every Moodle course is different; however the following list provides a brief summary of some of the icons and functions that may appear within a given Moodle course.

Editing and Navigation

	Move (topic, activity, resource or block)		Group permission icons: no groups, separate groups and visible groups (click on icon to cycle through the options)
	Indent activity or resource to the left or the right		Assign roles (contextual)
	Update / edit (activity or resource)		Help (contextual)
	Duplicate activity or resource		Increase / reduce the number of sections
	Delete activity or resource		Highlight as current topic
	Hide / show (topic, activity or resource)		Dock / undock block

Activities

	Assignment Used to submit files for marking. Integrated with the Turnitin plagiarism detection service.		**Lesson** Produces structured yet flexible learning paths.
	Chat A synchronous chat tool useful for small group work.		**Quiz** Online quiz tool that can automatically provide marks and feedback to the student.

	Choice		SCORM package
	Choice Similar to a poll. Often used to enable students to select seminar groups etc.		**SCORM package** Enables SCORM packages to be uploaded to a Moodle course.
	Database Enables data to be input (by either Teachers or Students) and stored in a searchable format.		Survey A range of pre-defined surveys that have been found useful in assessing and stimulating learning in online environments.
	Forum An asynchronous discussion tool.		**Wiki** A series of web pages that can be edited by anyone. Useful for group projects.
	Glossary List of definitions – can be populated by either Teacher or Students.		**Workshop** Facilitates peer and self-assessment.

RESOURCES

	Word file		Zip file
	Excel file		Folder
	PowerPoint file		IMS content package
	PDF file		Page
	Image		URL
	Label		Book