

# Introduction to Moodle

## Logging in

Logging-in to Moodle is very easy. Start by visiting the SNC Moodle website at <http://www.snc.edu/moodle>. After the website loads, find the box named **Login** at the right side of the screen. Type your SNC login ID in the **Username** field, and your password in the **Password** field. Press the Enter key or click the Login button to complete the login process. If there is a problem logging-in, you'll see a new screen where you can type your login id and password again.

After you're logged-in, the Login box will disappear and be replaced with a box named **My courses**. Here you'll see a list of the courses that you're enrolled in; click on any course to enter it.

Logging out is also very easy. There is a logout link at the bottom of every page and in the upper-right corner of every page. Click either link to logout.

## Types of courses in Moodle

Depending on your needs, Moodle courses can be created in a number of different ways:

*Demo course:* This type of course allows you to experiment with Moodle. No students are enrolled in these courses so you are free to explore Moodle without the risk of exposing course content to students. Although demo courses are a testing area, it's very easy to copy all the materials from a demo course to a real course.

*SNC course:* This is any course that is offered at St. Norbert College. The courses are categorized by semester (e.g., Summer 2008.) To activate any SNC course for the current semester, visit <http://www.snc.edu/start>, click the **Login** button (if displayed), then click the **Activate Moodle Course** link and follow the directions. After activating your courses, follow the link to login to Moodle. This completes the activation.

*Meta course:* This is a special Moodle course that combines other courses. For example, if you are teaching sections A and B of a course, Moodle can merge those sections into a single meta course, so you only need to add the course materials into the meta course instead of both sections. A meta course is best when multiple sections of a course meet in the same room at the same time. Meta courses are probably not appropriate when the sections meet at different times.

To create a meta course, you first need to activate your SNC courses. Activate your courses as describe above (in *SNC course*), and then contact Jay Cook ([Jay.Cook@snc.edu](mailto:Jay.Cook@snc.edu), 403-3973) to create a meta course that will combine your courses.

After your course is created or activated, it will be available when you login to Moodle. For courses that contain students (e.g., semester courses and meta courses), you won't see any students in the course until the students login to Moodle. This is different from Educator, where students are added when the course is created.

If you're not sure which type of course is best for your needs, please contact Jay Cook.

## Layout of the Moodle Screen

When a new course is created in Moodle, the course homepage looks complex and busy. Fortunately, the screen layout is highly customizable and much of the complexity can be removed as you design the course. For example, when a course is created, Moodle assumes that it will be 10 weeks long, so you'll see 10 sections running down the center of the screen. The number of weeks can be changed, and you can also hide weeks if you don't want the students to see the materials for those weeks

## Blocks

In addition to the default number of weeks, you'll also notice rectangular areas on the left and right sides of your course homepage. These areas are named *blocks*. Each block displays a specific type of information. When your course is created, the following blocks are automatically added to it:

Block Name	Description
People	Students can view a list of all the people in the course by clicking the Participants link.
Activities	This block enables the student to see all activities or forums.
Search Forums	Use this block to quickly search the forums.
Administration	Students can check their grades with the Grades link this block. Teachers have many more selections to customize the course as well as monitor grades.
Latest News	If teachers use the News forum, then the news will also appear in this block.
Upcoming Events	This block helps the students see what's coming up in the course.
Recent Activity	This block displays new activities, assignments, forums, etc that have been recently added or modified.

The first reaction many people have to a new course is that all the blocks make it very busy and hard to navigate. Don't worry - all blocks can be deleted or moved up/down and from one side to the other by the instructor. Additional blocks (e.g., a calendar) can be added as well.

## Adjusting Settings

Once your course is available in Moodle, you should customize both your course settings and the appearance of the course homepage before adding your content. This section describes how to customize the course settings. The next section describes how to modify the course homepage.

### Customizing the settings

To customize your course settings, use the **Settings** link on the left in the **Administration** block. There are many settings for your course, and you can learn about each setting by clicking the yellow circle with a question mark that appears next to the setting. Although you won't need to modify most of the settings, there are a few that you should check and change as necessary:

- \* Add a course Summary (brief description of your course),
- \* Set the Format (Weekly or Topic formats are the most common),
- \* Set the Course start date,
- \* Make sure the Course enrollable setting is set to "No" (this secures your course so that only the students that registered for your course will be allowed in through Moodle),
- \* Set the Number of weeks/topics for the course,

- \* Set the Availability to "This course is available to students",
- \* Set the Guest Access to "Do not allow guests in".

You're welcome to change other settings as well. If you're not sure about a setting, please contact Jay Cook. After the settings are complete, click the **Save Changes** button at the bottom.

## Adding Content

Your course homepage is the web page that students see when they enter your course. There are two ways to customize the homepage: modifying the blocks on the page, and adding your course content. However, before you can add content or change the layout of your Moodle course, you'll need to enable modifications to your course. If you haven't done so already, click the button named **Turn editing on** in the top-right portion of the screen. The middle portion of your page will expand and you'll see two drop-down menus (Add a resource, Add an activity) for each week or topic. Editing icons will also appear for each week/topic. The screen should look similar to the following image.

The screenshot displays the 'Weekly outline' section of a Moodle course. It is organized into three weekly blocks:

- 16 June - 22 June: Learning to use Moodle**
  - Items: News forum (with 'groups' icon), Moodle Glossary for SNC Faculty (with 'glossary' icon).
  - Actions: 'Add a resource...' and 'Add an activity...' dropdowns.
  - Editing icons: 'indent item', 'hide item', 'help'.
- 23 June - 29 June: Setting up your course**
  - Items: Moodle at St. Norbert College (with 'web link' icon), Logging in and out, Teacher documentation written by Moodle.
  - Actions: 'Add a resource...' and 'Add an activity...' dropdowns.
  - Editing icons: 'move item', 'delete item', 'edit item'.
  - Week controls: 'show only this week', 'hide week', 'reorder week'.
  - Open 'Add a resource...' menu: Insert a label, Compose a text page, Compose a web page, Link to a file or web site, Display a directory, Add an IMS Content Package.
  - Open 'Add an activity...' menu: Assignments (Advanced uploading of files, Online text, Upload a single file, Offline activity), Chat, Choice, Database, Forum, Glossary, Journal, Lesson, Quiz, Survey, Wiki, Workshop.
- 30 June - 6 July: Adding content**
  - Items: Adding Content: Overview, Adding Content: Resources, Adding content: Activities, Adding Content: Equations.
  - Actions: 'Add a resource...' and 'Add an activity...' dropdowns.
  - Editing icons: 'show item (currently hidden)'.

Other annotations include 'current week' pointing to the 23 June week, and 'documents' pointing to the document icons in the 23 June week.

The blocks on the left and right of the window (not shown in the above image) will also gain a set of editing icons at the top of each block.

## Blocks on the Homepage

### *What are blocks?*

Blocks are the rectangular areas that appear on the left and right sides of your course homepage. Some blocks are pre-configured to appear in your course homepage but you can remove them or move them to a different area. As a teacher, you can add, remove, and reposition the blocks in your courses, but students can't modify the block layout.

### *Managing the Blocks on your homepage*

To modify your course homepage, click on one of your courses and then click the **Turn editing on** button in the upper-right portion of the page. The editing icons for the blocks are the same as the course content. For example, to delete a block, click the **X** icon at the top of the block. (The block is not permanently gone - you can add it again later.) To move a block, click the appropriate arrow. If you want to keep a block on the screen but hide it from the students, click the eye button (it'll change to a closed eye, meaning that it's hidden.) To unhide a block, click the closed eye - it'll turn to an open eye and the block is now available.

### *Adding blocks*

On the right-side, below the other blocks, you'll see a block named **Blocks**. It contains a drop-down list of the available blocks. Click any block to add it. It will appear on the right-side, near the bottom of the blocks. You can move the block with the arrows.

To learn more about the block, and what each block does, visit the Moodle documentation on blocks: [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Blocks\\_\(teacher\)](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Blocks_(teacher)).

## Adding Content

You can add two types of content to your course: Resources and Activities. In general, Resources are things that your students should read, and Activities are things that your students should do.

### *Resources*

There are three common types of resources that you can add to your course. You can:

- \* type (or copy/paste) your content directly into Moodle (*Compose a web page*),
- \* upload files (e.g., a PDF of your syllabus) (*Link to a file or website*),
- \* link to content on other web sites (*Link to a file or website*).

### **Compose a web page**

Composing a web page is an easy way to add text to your course. You can type it or copy and paste from another program like Microsoft Word. Composing a web page provides an easy way to format the content (e.g., bold, italics, typing equations) but it also gives you the flexibility to add links to other web sites. When you compose a web page, you'll need to give the page a name, and you can also provide a short summary (optional) of the page. Don't type all your content in the summary; the complete content should be typed in the section named **Compose a web page**. When you're done, click the **Save changes** button.

### **Link to a file or website**

This resource is actually dual-purpose: it can link to a file (e.g., a PDF of your syllabus) or it can create a link to another website.

#### *Linking to a file:*

As with almost all content in Moodle, you'll need to type a name for the content (e.g., *Syllabus*) and an optional summary of the content. To link to a file, click the button **Choose or upload a file**. This opens up the Moodle file management window.

- \* If you've previously uploaded the file, locate it and click the **Choose** link to the right of the file name. Now click the **Save changes** button near the bottom of the window.
- \* If you have not already uploaded the file to Moodle, click the **Upload a file** button, and then click the **Browse** button. Find the file on your computer, then click the **Open** button. Now click the **Upload this file** button. In the file management window, locate the file you just uploaded, and click the **Choose** link to the right of the file name. Click the **Save changes** button near the bottom of the window.

### *Linking to a website:*

Linking to a website is very similar to the procedure for linking to a file: you'll need to type a name for the website and an optional summary. In the **Location** box, type the URL, or copy and paste it from your browser. (Copy and paste ensures that you won't make a typo in the URL.) Click the **Save changes** button near the bottom of the window.

### **Activities**

Activities are tasks that the students must complete. These include assignments, quizzes, participating in forums (on-line discussions), writing a journal, or recording observations in a database. With *many* of the activities, you can assign a due date. This automatically adds the activity to both the Calendar block and the Upcoming Events block. Some activities are also automatically added to the grade book.

### **Grades**

Grading activities is very easy: click on the activity and then click the link in the upper-right named **View # submitted...** You'll see a screen listing each student on the left with a Grade link on the right. To speed up the grading process, click the box named **Allow quick grading**, then click the **Save preferences** button. The setting will be saved so you won't need to click the box each time you grade an assignment. In addition to giving the assignment a grade, you can also type comments for the student. The grades will be automatically entered in the Moodle grade book.