

Groups

The groups tool allows instructors to create groups of students within a course. These course groups have their own areas in Blackboard Learn to collaborate on course work. These spaces are equipped with tools to assist in the collaborative process.

Your course groups may only meet in their group areas to discuss course content or trade files. But, you might also create assignments that you want students to collaborate on. Students can access all their group assignments on their group homepages.

To create a group

You can create formal groups of students to collaborate on work, and create these groups one at a time or in sets. You can manually select group members or allow students to self-enroll. Each group has its homepage with links to tools to help students collaborate. Only you and group members can access the group tools.

There are two group creation options:

- Create a single group
- Create a group set

About Group Enrollment Methods

Manual Enroll allows you to assign each student in your course to a group. Manual enrollment is available for both single groups and group sets.

Random Enroll is available for group sets only. It automatically distributes membership into groups based on a designated number of students per group or the designated number of groups. Random distribution applies only to students who are currently enrolled in your course. You can enroll additional students manually.

Self-Enroll allows students to add themselves to a group using a sign-up sheet. Self-enrollment is an option available for both single groups and group sets.

How to Create a Single Group

1. Select “Users and Groups” under “Module Management” on the left hand side menu.
2. The menu will expand to reveal options for Users and Groups. Select Groups
3. Click on the “Create” button towards the top left hand side.
4. For Single Group, click Self-Enroll or Manual Enroll.
5. On the Create Group page, type a name and optional description. Make the group visible to students.
6. Select the check boxes for the course tools you want to make available to the group.
7. Click the Grade option and type Points possible for Blogs, Journals, and Wikis, if you want to grade student submissions.
8. Unselect the check box for Allow Personalization.
 - For self-enroll Sign-up Options, type a name and provide instructions. You might tell students that they cannot unenroll themselves from groups. Type the Maximum Number of Members. Select any other options you want to include.
 - For the manual enroll Membership section, search for and select students from the Add Users pop-up window. Your selected group members appear in the bottom area with a number showing the total count. Click the Show List function, represented by a full square, to open the Add Users area to view your selections. To remove a user, click the X.
9. Click Submit.
10. The newly created group appears on the Groups listing page.

Group Tools

On the group homepage, students can access the tools you added for them. Only you and the group members can access tools enabled for a group, with the exception of the group blog and group wiki tools. Group blogs and wikis appear to all course members when the tools are accessed on the course Tools page.

The following list describes the available group tools:

Group Blog: Users within a group can add entries and comments to the group blog to share ideas. You can grade group blogs, but after you enable grading for a group blog, you cannot change that setting. When you add a grade for a group blog, the grade is automatically given to all the members of the group.

Collaboration Tools: Users within a group can create and attend real-time chat or virtual classroom sessions.

Group Discussion Board: Users within a group can communicate as a group, as well as create and manage their own forums. The group discussion board is available only to group members, not to the entire course. Unlike other graded group activities, when you set a group discussion board to graded, each member is graded independently of other group members.

Email: The group email tool allows for efficient communication. The recipient list is automatically populated with group members, so you can quickly select all or some of them. Emails are sent to members' external email addresses.

File Exchange: You and group members can use this tool to upload documents to the group area, and delete files, regardless of who added them. Files appear in the order they were uploaded. Uploaded images appear in a new browser window. This tool is only available to groups.

Group Journal: Users within a group can share their thoughts with each other and communicate with you. Journal entries made in the group journal are visible to all group members and you. You can grade group journals, but after you enable grading for a group journal, you cannot change that setting. When you add a grade for a group journal, the grade is automatically given to all the members of the group.

Group Tasks: Users within a group can define and separate the workload into tasks, while distributing the list to the entire group. Each task has a status and a due date to help keep members on track. Group members can view the group assigned tasks in the group tasks tool or in the course tasks tool. You and other course members will not see tasks for groups they are not enrolled in when viewing the course tasks tool.

Group Wiki: Use group wikis to create a collaborative space for group members to view, contribute, and edit content. By default, all course members can read group wikis, but only members of the group can make a comment on their group wiki page. You can change the default setting to allow only group members to view a group wiki. You can grade group wikis, but after you enable grading for a group wiki, you cannot change that setting. When you add a grade for a group wiki, the grade is automatically given to all the members of the group.