

These instructions are designed to help you set up groups for managing a course with combined sections. See also this guide for [applying group settings to resources and activities](#) and this article for [verifying enrollment in groups](#). If you plan to set up groups besides those for CRNs, read about [managing groups with groupings](#).



If your course includes cross-listed sections or if you combine multiple sections into one "meta" course in Moodle, the groups feature can make your life much easier! How? Here's a sampling of things a group setting makes possible:

- Send **Announcements** to individual sections as well as to all students.
- See just the students in one section when you take roll in an **Attendance** link.
- Manage **Assignments** by section: select one section from the **View/grade all submissions** page to download student work, extend a deadline, or enter grades—without having to sort through all the students enrolled in the course.
- View the gradebook and enter grades by CRN.

If you are not already familiar with creating groups, see [how to create groups](#) available from the [Moodle How-To's](#) page before reading the rest of these instructions. Be sure to review the notes in the **Special Consideration for Groups** section at the end of this guide to help you avoid bumps in the road.

Process Overview

Below are the overall steps that you will use to set your course up for managing multiple CRNs. Details for each step are on the following pages.

1. Adjust the overall course settings in the course shell you intend to use.
2. Create a group for each CRN.
3. Enroll students into their CRN groups as follows:
 - A. For cross-listed courses, refer to class rosters and enroll students in their respective groups.
 - B. For combined courses, enroll students in their CRN group as you create the course meta link.

1. Adjust Overall Course Settings

It's easiest to work in a course with students enrolled from multiple CRNs if you set the course itself up for groups. Having the course designated for groups will prepare the gradebook for entering grades by section, and every new activity created in the course will automatically be designated for groups. In most cases (forums being the exception), the group setting will be imperceptible to students, but it will let you view, download, and grade assignments by CRN. All new activities created in the course will default to the group mode you choose; you can change the group setting for any item if needed. To set your course for groups:

- a. Open the **Settings** menu at the top of the course main page.
- b. Open the **Groups** option area.
- c. Set the **Group mode** field to *Separate groups* or *Visible groups* (Figure 1) (see **Choose a Group Type** below).
- d. Leave the **Force group mode** and **Default grouping** fields set to "No" and "None."
- e. **Save changes.**



Figure 1: Set Course for Groups

Managing CRNs With Groups

Choose a Group Type

For most activities and resources, your choice of *Separate* or *Visible* groups makes no difference to you or your students—it just makes it possible to manage student work and grades by section (see [this article](#) for instructions on changing the group mode for an item). Which type you choose will depend on your needs:

- **Cross-listed courses:** If you are teaching a cross-listed course where all the students will meet at the same time, **visible** groups will allow students to see the entire course enrollment when they click on the **Participants** list. As you create course content, the only new items that may need adjustment will be discussion forums—for a general discussion intended for all participants, you'll want to change the forum's *Visible groups* setting to *No groups*.
- **Combined courses:** If you have combined sections and intend to manage each course independently (where students from one section will not interact with students in another section), **separate** groups will maintain each set of students in isolation from the rest. Students will only be able to see their classmates in the **Participants** list and will only be able to see the posts their classmates make to any discussion forums. This is an important FERPA consideration, as well as a course management factor.

2. Create Groups

Follow the instructions in this [guide to group creation](#) to create a group for each CRN, using the CRN itself or the meeting time as the group name.

3. Enroll Users

Note: You don't need to enroll yourself in groups, as you will be able to view and participate in group activities without being enrolled.

Cross-listed Courses—Manual Enrollment

- On the main **Groups** page, click on a group name from the list of groups in the left column.
- Click on the **Add/remove users** link under the column on the right.
- Referring to a class roster, select a student's name and click on **◀ Add** to include him/her in the group (Figure 2).

! TIP: To add multiple students at one time, hold the Ctrl key down as you click on each name.

- Click on **Back to groups** after adding students to the group. Select the next CRN group and add the students enrolled in that section.

! Students will *not* automatically be assigned to their groups as they register for your class. You will need to monitor enrollment and add late registrants to their CRN groups. See [Check Group Enrollment](#) for details.

The screenshot shows the 'Add/remove users: Demo Course 1' interface. It is divided into two main sections: 'Group members' on the left and 'Potential members' on the right. The 'Group members' section currently shows 'None' and has a search bar below it. The 'Potential members' section lists several users: Student Eight (0), Student Four (0), Student One (0), Student Seven (0), Student Six (0), Student Three (0), Student Two (0), Teacher (1), and Test Teacher (0). A red circle highlights the '◀ Add' button located between the two sections. Below the 'Potential members' list is another search bar and a 'Clear' button. At the bottom of the interface, there are 'Search options' and a 'Back to groups' button.

Figure 2: Select & Add Users to Group

Combined (Meta Linked) Courses—Auto & Manual Enrollment

- a. **Before** combining your courses, enroll the students in the main (parent) course into the group corresponding to the parent course CRN. Follow the steps for cross-listed courses above to add students to their CRN group, selecting all users by clicking on the first name, holding down your shift key and scrolling down to select the last name.
 - b. Create a *meta enrollment* link for the first CRN you wish to add by following [these instructions](#), adding students to their corresponding group.
-  Students enrolled through meta links will automatically be assigned to their group as they register, but you will need to [monitor enrollment](#) in the parent course CRN to make sure that late registrants are added to their CRN group.

Special Consideration for Groups

- **Group enrollments are critical.** If you are using groups to control access to activities and resources, you need to make sure that everyone enrolled in the course is assigned to a group—if you switch your role to student, you'll find that group-specific items may no longer be available to you because you don't belong to a group. Monitor enrollment carefully in the first few weeks of the term to make sure each student is enrolled in the correct group.
- **Update existing activities.** Set your **Announcements** link to separate groups and you'll be able to post notices for all students or specific groups. If you already have an **Attendance** activity in your course, be sure to set it for separate groups as well and you'll be able to create dedicated sessions for sections that meet at different times.
- **Customize due dates.** Use [group overrides for quizzes](#) and [deadline extensions for assignments](#) to set different due dates for each section. Students will not perceive any difference in how deadlines are displayed.
- **Customize activities and resources.** You can designate items for one group, but not others, by using the [Restrict access](#) function. For graded activities, restricted items only appear in the group members' gradebooks. You can also dedicate entire course sections to individual CRNs using restrict access. Be sure to click the eyeball closed as you set up the restriction to hide restricted items from nonparticipating groups.
- **Use groupings to accommodate actual group work.** With [groupings](#), you can support team projects with additional groups in Moodle. Organizing different kinds of groups with groupings is easy to do and ensures that students will be able to access the correct group for each group activity.