
MOODLE

How to Create a Course in Moodle

Learn how to create a course in Moodle 4.5, including setting up essential details like course names, categories, and visibility. This beginner's guide requires site administrator or manager permissions.

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How to Create a Course in Moodle

Paul Flanders · 21 May 2026

Moodle version: 4.5 **Estimated time:** 5 minutes **Difficulty:** Beginner

Why you'd use this

Every piece of learning content in Moodle lives inside a course. Before you can add activities, upload resources, or enrol students, you need to create the course itself. This guide walks you through creating a new, empty course and configuring its essential settings so it's ready for you to build on.

Before you start

Permissions required:

- **Site administrator** role, or
- **Manager** role (site-wide or in the category where you want the course), or
- A role with the capability moodle/course:create assigned at the category level your administrator may have set this up for course creators

Note: Teachers cannot create courses by default. Teachers can only be added to a course once it already exists.

You'll need:

A name for your course (required) and a short name the short name appears in breadcrumbs and navigation menus, so keep it brief and unique.

- The course category you want the course to sit in if you're not sure which category to use, check with your Moodle administrator before you start.
- A rough idea of your course start date.
- An enrolment method in mind (manual enrolment, self-enrolment, or another method) you don't have to configure this now, but it helps to know.

Not sure if you have the right permissions? Go to **Site administration** in the left-hand navigation if you can see it, you have sufficient access to create courses.

Step-by-step

Step 1: Open Site Administration

Click **Site administration** in the left-hand navigation panel. This opens the site administration area.

Tip: If you don't see Site administration, you may be a Teacher or Student in a course but not a site-level Manager or Administrator. Ask your Moodle administrator to either upgrade your role or create the course for you.

Site administration

GeneralUsersCoursesGradesPluginsAppearanceServerReportsDevelopment	
Don't miss out on important updates and security alerts. Register your site	
	NotificationsRegistrationFeedback settingsAdvanced featuresSite admin presets
AI	AI providersAI placements
Analytics	Site informationAnalytics settingsAnalytics models
Competencies	Competencies settingsMigrate frameworks

Step 2: Go to the Courses section

Click the Courses tab at the top of the Site administration page. Then click Add a new course from the options that appear.

Site administration

General	Users	Courses	Grades	Plugins	Appearance	Server	Reports	Development
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Don't miss out on important updates and security alerts. [Register your site](#)

Courses	Manage courses and categories Add a category Add a new course Restore course Download course content Course request Pending requests Upload courses MCBA - Archive Browser
Default settings	Course default settings Default activity completion Course custom fields
Groups	Group custom fields Grouping custom fields

Step 3: Enter the course full name

In the Course full name field, type the complete name of your course exactly as you want learners to see it for example, Health and Safety Induction 2026. This is the name displayed on the course page and in search results.

Add a new course

General

Course full name	? ! My New Course
Course short name	? !
Course category	? ! × EssingtonITS Search ▾
Course visibility	? Show ▾
Course start date	? 22 ▾ May ▾ 2026 ▾ 00 ▾ 00 ▾ 📅
Course end date	? ☒ Enable 22 ▾ May ▾ 2027 ▾ 00 ▾ 00 ▾ 📅
Course ID number	?

Step 4: Enter the course short name

In the Course short name field, type a brief, unique identifier for example, HSI-2025. This appears in the navigation breadcrumb and in reports. No two courses on your site can share the same short name.

Add a new course

General

Course full name	? ! My New Course
Course short name	? ! MNC
Course category	? ! × EssingtonITS Search ▾
Course visibility	? Show ▾
Course start date	? 22 ▾ May ▾ 2026 ▾ 00 ▾ 00 ▾ 📅
Course end date	? ☒ Enable 22 ▾ May ▾ 2027 ▾ 00 ▾ 00 ▾ 📅
Course ID number	?

Step 5: Set the course category

Click the Course category dropdown and select the category where this course should live. If the correct category doesn't exist, you'll need to ask your administrator to create it you can't add a new category from this screen.

Add a new course

▼

General

Course full name

1

?

My New Course

Course short name

1

?

MNC

Course category

1

?

You must supply a value here.

No selection

Search

▼

Health & Safety

Cyber Security

HR & Compliance

Leadership & Management

Data Protection & GDPR

EssingtonITS

Course visibility

?

Course start date

?

6

00

00

📅

Course end date

?

2027

00

00

📅

Course ID number

?

▼

Description

Step 6: Set the course visibility

Locate the **Course visibility** setting:

- Choose Show if you want students to be able to see the course immediately once enrolled.
- Choose Hide if you want to keep the course invisible to students while you're still building it. (You can change this at any time.)

General

Course full name

My New Course

Course short name

MNC

Course category

EssingtonITS

Course visibility

Show

Course start date

May 2026 00 00

Course end date

Enable 22 May 2027 00 00

Course ID number

Description

Course summary

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help

Tip: It's good practice to leave the course hidden while you're setting it up, then switch to Show when it's ready.

Step 7: Set the start date

Click the Course start date fields and set the date your course begins. This affects how the course appears in timelines and, if you're using a weekly format, it determines which week is "Week 1."

Add a new course

▼ General

Course full name

Course short name

Course category

Course visibility

Course start date

Course end date

Course ID number

1

2

1

2

1

2

2

2

2

2

May 2026

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

22

May

2026

00

00

☒ Enable

22

May

2027

00

00

▼ Description

Step 8: Set the course end date (optional)

If your course has a fixed end date, turn on the Enable checkbox next to Course end date and set the date. After this date, students cannot post to the course but can still view content. Leave this disabled if your course runs indefinitely.

Step 9: Choose a course format

Scroll down to the Course format section. Click the Format dropdown and choose how your course content will be organised:

- **Topics format:** content is divided into numbered or named topics (most common)
- **Weekly format:** content is divided into weekly sections, auto-labelled by date
- **Single activity format:** the course contains just one activity (useful for a single quiz or SCORM package)

Add a new course

> General

> Description

> Course format

Format

Number of sections

Hidden sections

Course layout

Custom sections

☒ Custom sections

The course is divided into customisable sections.

☐ Weekly sections

The course is divided into sections corresponding to each week, beginning from the course start date.

☐ Single activity

The course contains only one activity or resource.

☐ Social

The course is centred around a main forum on the course page. Additional activities and resources can be added using the Social activities block.

> Appearance

> Files and uploads

> Completion tracking

> Groups

> Tags

Verify: confirm these are still the main format options available in Moodle 4.5, and check if any new formats are bundled by default.

Step 10: Set the number of sections

In the Number of sections field (visible for Topics and Weekly formats), enter how many topics or weeks your course will have. You can add or remove sections later, so don't worry about getting this exactly right.

▼

Course format

Format

Number of sections

Hidden sections

Course layout

Custom sections ▼

4 ▼

0

1 sections are completely invisible ▼

2

3 all sections on one page ▼

4

5

6

7 force ▼

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19 ▼

▼

Appearance

Force language

Number of announcements

Show gradebook to students

Show activity reports

Show activity dates

>

Files and uploads

>

Completion tracking

Step 11: Save the new course

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click Save and display. Moodle creates the course and takes you straight to the empty course page.

Add a new course

> General

> Description

> **Course format**

> Appearance

> Files and uploads

> Completion tracking

> Groups

> Tags

> Micro-learning Nudges

Save and return

Save and display

Cancel

 Required

Note: Clicking Save and return instead will return you to the course list without opening the new course. Either is fine just be aware of the difference.

Check it worked

After saving, you should land on your new course page. The course name appears as the page heading, and you'll see the empty topic or weekly sections you configured. At the top of the page, you should see a confirmation bar or be in Edit mode ready to start adding content.

To confirm the course is in your system, go to **Site administration > Courses > Manage courses** and categories and look for your new course in the correct category.

Common problems

- **"Short name is already in use":** Every course must have a unique short name. Add a year, cohort code, or another distinguishing suffix (e.g. change Induction to Induction-2025-A).

- **"I can't see the category I need":** Categories must already exist before you can assign a course to them. Ask your Moodle administrator to create the missing category.
- **The course is visible in my list but students say they can't find it:** Check two things: (1) Course visibility is set to Show, and (2) the students have actually been enrolled — a visible course is still only accessible to enrolled users.
- **I saved the course but it's in the wrong category:** Go to the course, click Settings (the cog icon or via the Course administration menu), scroll to Course category, change it, and click Save and display.

Looking to enhance your Moodle experience? [EssingtonITS](#) offers expert IT services to optimise your learning platforms. For tailored Moodle hosting and support, explore our dedicated e-learning services at myelms.co.uk. Let us help you achieve seamless and efficient e-learning solutions.

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