Moodle Manual for Students

This Moodle Manual for Students is targeted to students who are using University of Helsinki Moodle virtual learning environment version 2.4.4 in their studies. Updating of this manual is done by Educational Centre for ICT. Please send improvement suggestions and comments to ok-moodle@helsinki.fi.

If you need to practice different functions in Moodle as a student e.g. how to download a file to Moodle or how to complete an online test, please join the training course "Moodle harjoituskurssi / Moodle training course, 2015" [https://moodle.helsinki.fi/course/view.php?id=6884 (category: Training courses)]. Feel free to go through Moodle tools as a student! You don’t need a course enrollment key to join in.

Click on the figures to enlarge them.

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1. General information about Moodle

Moodle is the virtual learning environment used in University of Helsinki. Moodle has tens of millions of users world-wide. In Finland it is used in most universities and applied universities. The word ‘Moodle’ is an acronym of Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It is also a verb in the English language which means idle meandering or trifling with something.

Moodle is used with a web browser. Because there are differences between browsers, the differences are reflected to the use of Moodle, as well. The only recommended browser is Mozilla Firefox, used in all operating systems (Windows, Linux, Mac). There are known problems caused by other browser applications, i.e. the inability to upload files.

Here’s an example image of what UH’s Moodle front page looks like (on the left). After you logging in to Moodle you may see course areas like this one (on the right).
Moodle provides various opportunities to communicate between students and teacher. You can, for example, take part in online discussions, answer online quizzes or opinion polls, submit course work and files electronically as well as take online exams.

2. Logging in to Moodle


Use the Login-block in the upper right corner. Select University of Helsinki account. Use your UH user ID and password. Also users with lightweight ID’s use the same link to log in. If you want to log in with user ID of another university, choose HAKA federation account (network of finnish universities) or KALMAR federation account (network of nordic universities).

Tips for logging in

There might be several reasons if you cannot log in:

- If you receive an error notification “Käyttäjätunnistus ei onnistunut, Authentication did not succeed” (the address in the browser's address field is https://idp.it.helsinki.fi/idp/Authn/HYLogin), your password, user ID or both are incorrect. Is your https://idp.it.helsinki.fi/idp/Authn/HYLogin account valid? Did you write your ID in its short form? Have you forgotten your password? Contact Helpdesk about your account. More info on user accounts: http://www.helsinki.fi/helpdesk/eng/instructions/user_accounts_and_passwords/user_accounts/.

- If you receive the following error notification: "Error. An error occurred while processing your request. Please contact your helpdesk or user ID office for assistance. Error message: Invalid IdP URL (HTTP 404)". The address in your browser is: https://idp.it.helsinki.fi/idp/Authn/HYLogin, you have most likely started your log in incorrectly. Have you bookmarked Moodle log in as https://idp.it.helsinki.fi/idp/Authn/HYLogin? You must always login in at http://moodle.helsinki.fi and from Login-block on the right using University of Helsinki account link.

- If you have started logging in correctly, given the right ID and password, and still you cannot get into Moodle, and you know that other students cannot get in either, it may be due to a server update or other server problem. Contact the university Helpdesk at http://www.helsinki.fi/helpdesk/eng/contact/.

3. Enrolling to courses

You can join a course by self enrollment if your teacher has allowed it.

- If your teacher has provided you with the direct address to the course area (of form http://moodle.helsinki.fi/course/view.php?id=xxxx), use that address.

- If your teacher has provided you with the course name, use the Search courses option on Moodle front page. You can search by course name, part of the name or course short name. Select the right course by clicking on it’s name.

- If you don't find the right course in the lists, contact your teacher on how to find it.

If you have not logged in yet, do it now. For instructions, please see above. Finally, give a course enrollment key (if one has been set for the course). Course enrollment key = the password for registering to a course, which is asked only when first enrolling to the course. Course enrollment key is set by the teacher or the course administrator.
4. Language settings

Moodle is provided with three language choices: Finnish, Swedish in Finland and English. The language on the Moodle front page is defined by the browser’s default language before logging in. You can change the language from the drop-down menu on the top right hand corner.

The language in each Moodle course is selected based on 1) the possible forced language on the course area 2) your selection after logging in from the drop-down menu or 3) your profile settings.

You can also change the session language after you have logged in. The language you changed from the drop-down menu remains the same until the end of each log in session (if your teacher has not decided otherwise on the course area). If you want to change your default language and save it permanently, you can do it in your personal profile. This shows your Moodle courses always in your chosen language whenever you log in. For more information on your profile settings, please see below.

5. My home page with Course overview

After logging in you see your personal Course overview. In the middle section there is a list of all the courses you have signed up and the upcoming events that relate to your courses. You can access your courses by clicking on to the relevant course name.

If courses are missing from the list,

- you have not registered to the right courses yet and must register to those courses. For more information on registering to courses, please see above.
- you are participant in more than 10 courses; only the first 10 ones are displayed in the list. To reach all your courses, use the Customise this page button in the upper right corner and select the number of courses you want displayed from the drop-down menu.

6. Navigation in Moodle and docking blocks

The Moodle header includes a navigation path on the left. It starts with My home > My courses > Course name and continues according to the contents on the course page that you have selected. You can always use the navigation path for returning on the course page or My home page. The same functionalities are included in the block Navigation that includes links to My home, front page and your courses, including their contents. Via these links you are able to navigate in Moodle.

By default, there are blocks on the left and right side of course areas in Moodle. You can dock them to the side bar on the left by clicking on the small square in the upper right corner of each block. You can see the contents of the docked blocks by taking the mouse over the block name. Return the block to the course area by clicking the same square in the docked block. Note that docking the blocks is a personal setting that affects all your course areas in Moodle.

7. Profile settings
You can check your user profile after you have logged in to Moodle by clicking your name on the top right hand corner (as an example You are logged in as Mary Moodler) or by choosing Edit profile in the Settings block anywhere in Moodle. Note that your profile is personal and is shown on all your Moodle courses.

You can change your profile settings under two menus at Settings block: 1) Edit profile for changing general information (e.g. contact information) and 2) Messaging to change incoming message settings (e.g. notifications).

7.1 Edit Profile

You can edit your profile information with the following details:

- **Email display**: You can choose how publicly your email address is shown. The alternatives are a) to all UH users, b) only to the members of your courses (standard setting), or c) no-one. **NOTE that if you decide to select alternative c, your email address is not even shown in emails sent from Moodle.** Therefore, no-one can reply to you the messages by email; the replies instead end up in trash.
- **Email digest type**: You can define how you receive information on messages from discussion forums in your Moodle courses to your personal email. If the discussion forums are very active, it is best to choose “Subjects (daily email with subjects only). Then you will receive only one digested message per day from Moodle discussion forums (which you have subscribed or your teacher forces you to subscribe). The digested message is delivered at 17.00 each day. You can also subscribe each discussion forum separately; in this case you will receive notifications in full to your personal email: “No digest (single email by forum post)”
- **Forum auto-subscribe**: This defines how you can subscribe discussion forums to your email - by default when you enter a discussion forum or only when you subscribe a certain discussion forum (forum per forum). Usually, in the beginning of a course, it is useful to choose “Yes: when I post, subscribe me to that forum”. Later in the course you can change the default into “No: don’t automatically subscribe me to forums”. Even after this choice, you can subscribe individual discussion forums that are active at the time.
- **Preferred language**: the default language in Moodle usually is Finnish, but Swedish and English are possible as well.
- **Picture**: You can add your picture to you profile, which is then shown to the members of your courses, e.g. in participant lists and discussion forum postings.

7.2 Messaging

It is recommended to enable all notifications e.g. to receive a notification when your teacher has given you feedback in your assignment. You can freely choose whether to receive notifications as a pop-up or as an email sent to your email address.

Tips for editing your user profile
8. Student process in Moodle: submitting written work and discussion forum

The activities mostly used in Moodle are discussion forums and submitting course work (files and/or written work).

Learning tasks in Moodle can be submitted in discussion forums as attachments that all course participants are able to read, but often there are separate submission activities for various written tasks: uploading files or writing texts that only teachers can read.

8.1. Discussion forum

On the front page of the discussion forum you can see the topics (titles) of messages, the name of the person who has started a discussion (and possibly his/her picture), number of replies, number of unread messages and the date and time of the latest posting. In forums with groups there is an additional drop-down menu for group selection above the list of discussion topics. Postings from the discussion forums can also be searched by key words (Search forums in top right hand corner of the page). You can also subscribe postings to your personal email from the link Subscribe to this forum in the Settings block.

New discussion threads are begun by clicking the button Add a new discussion topic. Messages can be opened by clicking on the title of each topic. Note: in forums with groups, first select the right group in the drop-down menu before starting to write the message.

The discussion messages are sent to participant email after a 30 min delay. During the 30 min time, you have the possibility to edit your message. If you want to send your discussion message to participant email immediately after saving it, use the Mail now possibility (see the picture below). Moodle forwards sent messages every 10 minutes (full hours + n x 10min). You still have the 30 min time to edit your message, when needed.

In Moodle, discussion postings accumulate in threads and they are indented. All users can change the visual view so they can look at the postings in threaded or nested form, the newest posting on top. The posting view can be updated from the drop-down menu (see the picture below) on top of the discussion page.

You answer a posting by clicking Reply. The title of the reply posting is copied automatically from the original posting, but it is important to update it in a form that best describes your message in your reply posting.

Note: You can edit and delete your own postings for 30 minutes after sending the posting, but not after that. If you need to edit or delete postings later on, contact your course teacher or administrator.

8.2 Submitting written work (assignment)

Individual assignments are file submissions or online texts, for which the teacher has defined a deadline. Individual assignment is always submitted to the teacher, which means that students cannot read each others’ individual assignments. After the submission deadline, teacher can give personalized feedback to students about the assignment. Students can read their feedback from the same place where they submitted their work.

If your teacher has asked you to submit your assignment as a file, do the actual assignment for example as a Word-document. After clicking Add submission, click Add... or drag and drop your file(s). Depending on the features your teacher has defined, you can either upload one or several files. The file that is submitted should be named appropriately; avoid Scandinavian alphabets (å, ä, ö).
Also online text is submitted by clicking Add submission. Write the text directly or copy it from e.g. Word (copy + paste) to the Moodle text editor.

Don’t forget to click Save changes button at the bottom of the page!

8.3. Wiki as a group work tool

Coming soon

9. Student progress and completion tracking

Coming soon

10. Student portfolio

Coming soon

11. Help for problem cases in Moodle

Help for students

If you have problems with course contents (enrolment key, materials, activities, exams, instructions, course criteria, schedule, etc.) contact first your teacher. Each teacher is responsible for his/her own courses.

In general problems of Moodle use, contact Helpdesk at helpdesk@helsinki.fi or tel. 02941 55555. More information: http://www.helsinki.fi/helpdesk/eng/contact/index.html