Moodle 2.8

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North Dakota University System

Advanced Learning Technologies
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## Contents

About Moodle .......................................................................................................................... 5

Training Goals .......................................................................................................................... 5

New User Menu ......................................................................................................................... 6

Newly Designed Gradebook ................................................................................................... 6

Improved Grader Report ......................................................................................................... 8

New Single View ...................................................................................................................... 11

New Categories and Items Page .............................................................................................. 12

Natural Weighting ................................................................................................................... 13

New Grade history report ....................................................................................................... 17

User Report updates ................................................................................................................ 18

New HTML Text Editor .......................................................................................................... 19

Forum Updates ........................................................................................................................ 21

Assignment Updates ............................................................................................................... 24

Attach Documents .................................................................................................................. 24

Word limit ................................................................................................................................. 25

Comment Inline ....................................................................................................................... 26

Student Feedback Notification ............................................................................................... 28

Improved Quiz Edit Screen and Completion Settings ............................................................. 29

Choice Activity Updates ......................................................................................................... 30

Event Monitoring .................................................................................................................... 30

Improved Conditional Activities and Restricted Access ......................................................... 34

Restricting access ................................................................................................................... 34

Activity Completion ............................................................................................................... 36

Badges Improvements .......................................................................................................... 36

Training Resources ................................................................................................................ 37
Video Tutorials .................................................................................................................. 37

Moodle Minute: https://lms.ndus.edu/course/view.php?id=314 ........................................... 37

Websites ............................................................................................................................. 37
About Moodle

Moodle is an open source learning management system (LMS) used at institutions in the North Dakota University System (NDUS) to support and manage learning for students, faculty and staff. Moodle provides opportunities for faculty to extend their teaching capabilities and service students, as well as support learning communities.

Moodle’s structure is founded upon a specific learning-centered education philosophy called social constructivism whereby people learn through engaging in the social process of constructing knowledge. Activities like Moodle’s Workshop make learning central to the task. Moodle provides the capability to discuss and share digitally created artifacts for learning. In contrast to other LMS’s, Moodle focuses on sharing ideas and actively engaging students in the construction of knowledge; when used as intended Moodle goes beyond simply delivering information.

This training manual is designed to introduce new changes found in Moodle versions 2.7 and 2.8. The North Dakota University System introduced Moodle 2.8 to replace version 2.6 at the beginning of summer 2015.

Training Goals

The goal of this handout is to provide Moodle users with a comprehensive understanding of the changes and new features in Moodle versions 2.7 and 2.8 including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New user menu</th>
<th>New HTML editor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moodle Gradebook improvements</td>
<td>Forum updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz and Question Bank module updates</td>
<td>Choice module update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment updates</td>
<td>New completion options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important note:** NDUS Advanced Learning Technologies recommends using the latest version of Firefox with Moodle as other browsers may not support some features.

**Prerequisite:** This manual is intended for users with prior experience using Moodle in an academic or support environment.
New User Menu

A dropdown list located next to your name and profile picture gives quick access to personal pages within Moodle such as My home, My profile, My private files and My badges.

Newly Designed Gradebook

The Moodle 2.8 gradebook is an overhaul of the previous version that had been mostly untouched since Moodle 1.9. This new gradebook was a result of information gathered from community workshops, surveys, and bug reports. The Moodle 2.8 gradebook provides significant improvements designed to make the gradebook easier to use and addresses long standing issues identified by faculty.
As with the previous version of the gradebook, the new version has three primary views instructors utilize for grading and managing grades: Grader Report, User Report, and Categories and Items. You can access the gradebook as before, by clicking Grades in the Administration block on the left side of your course. Once you click on Grades, you can access gradebook views from the Administration block of your course under Grade administration, or with a dropdown list or the tabs located at the top of each view.
Improved Grader Report

Many improvements have been made to the Grader report which is now functional across all mobile devices. You can quickly edit cells without reloading, search and display grades by a single user or by a single gradable item, and scroll while the first/last name column and the gradable items row remain static. You’ll notice a new filter for displaying names by first and/or last and tabs have been changed to reflect new views and reports.

Quickly edit cells

When utilizing Moodle assessment tools that have a grading component such as the quiz module or the assignment module, Moodle automatically passes scores directly to the gradebook. However, there may be times when you wish to edit the Grader report directly, such as inputting grades to manually added grade columns or to override existing grades. In Moodle 2.8 this process has been made easier because cells no longer need to update after each entry. To add grades directly to the Grader report, or to override grades, do the following:

1. Within the Grader report, locate and click the **Turn Editing On** button in the upper right corner.
2. You will see fields for grading each item. Click into the field and **type the appropriate number**.
3. Pressing the **Tab** key will send you to the next field down the column.
4. Pressing the **Enter** key will update the page in Moodle. It is advised to press Enter periodically if you are grading many students to avoid losing progress if you have an issue with your computer.

Paste from a spreadsheet

Moodle 2.8 allows you to paste grades into the Grader report straight from a spreadsheet like Excel or Libre Office. The spreadsheet should have at least one column containing user identity data such as username, ID number, or email address. Each column of your spreadsheet should have a column header. To paste from a spreadsheet:
1. Ensure you have the correct column names for your grades (i.e. the assignment title or manual grade). It might help to export from the gradebook first to obtain the information and then edit the downloaded data.

2. For the students you need either their username, their ID or their email address. Add the grades you need and copy the relevant section.

To paste from a spreadsheet complete the following steps:

1. Locate the Grade administration block
2. Choose Import
3. Choose Paste from spreadsheet
4. Paste into the Data field.
5. Leave Encoding to UTF-8, Verbose scales to Yes, and adjust your preview rows.

Note: The Force Import setting overrides grades even if the grades were updated after the import file was exported. Click on Upload grades.

6. In the preview, ensure you match up the identifier you used for the students. For example if you used email make sure it maps to ‘email’. Do the same for your graded activities and click Upload grades.
7. A receipt page will indicate if the process was successful, click Continue.

8. The grades are then pasted and appear in the gradebook.
New Single View

Single view allows you to view either all the grades of one single student or a single grade item for all students. You can access the single view through the grader report, or within the administration block:

1. Course
2. Grade administration

Display and edit grades by a single student

You can grade multiple items for a single student, or you may want to use this view to check all the grades of a single student. To view and edit the grades of a single student:

1. Click the pencil icon to the right of the student’s name under the First name/Last name column.

The new page allows you to adjust grades for that specific student only. You can also add feedback, override the student’s grades or exclude a grade for a specific student.

Display and edit the grades of a single activity

A new feature in Moodle allows you to display and adjust/override the grades and provide feedback of a single gradable activity. From this page, you can also perform a bulk insert of grades. For example, you may want to assign a zero to all students that have empty grades. To view and edit grades for a single activity:
1. Within the Grader report, click the **pencil icon** to the right of the gradable item’s name.

![Image of the pencil icon](image)

2. On the next page, you can apply a grade for each student, give feedback, override a grade, or exclude the item’s grade for a particular student. At the bottom of the page, you can apply a specific grade to all students, or only those with empty grades. Click **Update** when finished.

![Image of the grade page](image)

**New Categories and Items Page**

The Categories and Items page is the primary space for organizing and setting up your gradebook. The newly designed page is simplified and utilizes the Natural Weighting of Grades method for calculating grades. Now, instructors can dynamically adjust the weights of grade items and categories using a single aggregation method to accomplish calculations without having to understand the setup of the numerous aggregation methods found in the older Moodle gradebook.
This is where you access settings such as extra credit, hide a grade, or reset the grade’s weight. Although Moodle adjusts the weights automatically as gradable items are added, the weight column allows the instructor to override the weight of each grade or column to bring about desired results.

**Natural Weighting**
Moodle 2.8 provides a new versatile aggregation method that replaces all aggregation methods found in the previous gradebook. This new method combines grades simply, has a clearer interface for using weights, and supports extra credit, excluded grades, and hidden grades.

**Rational**
In grading, **weight** is the proportion of an item's value in relation to all the other items in its container (category or course). Every grade item has a weight. An items **Value** is most often represented as 'points'.

There are three fundamental approaches to dealing with weighting in a gradebook:
1. **Simple (or natural) weighting**: Maximum points earnable for each item are appropriately in relation to one another. For example, if you have two items in a category, one worth 10 points and the other worth 30, then item 1 is 25% (10/40) and item 2 is 75% (30/40).

2. **Adjusted weighting**: Users often want to adjust categories and even items to have a weight other than the natural weight, essentially ignoring the points entirely. An example would be, Quizzes=40%, Assignments=50%, Attendance=10%.

3. **Mean of grades**: If I have a category made up of five quizzes all worth different points and I want a category percentage to just tell the average (or mean) of all the quiz results' percentage correct, I would choose this approach again, disregarding the points.

Simplifying the understanding of weighting reduces the aggregation methodology down to 'either/ or'

- Either 'leave weights as is -- natural'
- Or ‘adjust to suit my needs -- adjusted weights'

This greatly simplifies the interface needed present these options so that:

- Graders don't need to select an aggregation type.
- Graders don't need to know how each of the many aggregation types in older version of Moodle perform.
- The actual weight of every item and category is always displayed to the grader.
- Quick adjustments can be made to weights to produce the desired results.

Natural weighting does not support the following aggregation methods found in earlier versions of Moodle: Lowest and Median/Mode of grades. However, Lowest could be accomplished with a calculation into a new item.

**Typical calculation examples using natural weighting**

1. **Sum of Grades**: (Default method in Moodle 2.8 natural weighting)

   In this case you have a series of assignments and quizzes you just want their scores added together out of the total possible. You also have extra credit to add in at the end.
No action is required regarding weights and you now have the added benefit of being able to display to students a percentage of the total earned to that point.

2. **Simple Mean:**

   In this case you have three assignments: A (10 points), B (10 points) and C (10 points) plus a final quiz D (20 points), and you want the final grade to be the simple mean percentage of all these
scores. You should adjust all weights to be the same. In this example it would be set to 25%.

3. Weighted categories and/or items:

In this example, let’s say you have multiple categories whose category totals are not in relation to each other as desired. You want the 'Quizzes' to be worth 20%, the 'Exams' to be worth 50% (with the midterm worth 40% and the final worth 60%), 'Assignments' worth 20%, and 'Attendance' worth 10%

You would edit the weights and

- place the value 20 on the Quizzes category line
- place the value 50 on the Exams category line
- place the value 20 on the midterm exam item line
- place the value 30 on the final exam item line
- place the value 20 on the Assignments category line
- place the value 10 on the Attendance category (or item) line
Finally, you would save their weight settings.

New Grade history report

In Moodle 2.8, there is a new report that allows you to select specific students, grade items and/or graders and view the grading history for certain dates. It is possible to view only revised grades and to download the data in various formats such as .csv or Excel. This report can be accessed from the administration panel by navigating to

1. Course
2. Grade Administration
3. Grade History.

User Report updates
The User report page in Moodle 2.8 has been updated so that students will be able to see exactly how their grades were calculated by showing the weight of each grade. As with the older version, this new page also allows instructors to quickly see each student’s grades as the student would see them. Gradable items appear as they are organized within the categories and items page. The Calculated weight column allows the student to see the weight each grade is given and other columns provide the actual grade, percentage, and instructor feedback.
New HTML Text Editor

Moodle has a new default HTML editor called ATTO. The former HTML editor, TinyMCE is still an option found in your profile settings. ATTO gives some added functionality such as automatically saving your text as you type, however font choices and colors are limited to help ensure accessibility. At first look, you may not notice changes, as the interface is very similar to TinyMCE. However, ATTO may respond differently at times to ensure increased accessibility and other web page design considerations. The HTML editor you use can be chosen within your profile:

1. Administration
2. My Profile settings
3. Edit profile.
ATTO also provides a new equation editor. If either the MathJax (suggested) or the TeX notation filters are enabled within the Filters settings in your administration block, then an equation editor button appears in the ATTO toolbar. This new equation editor doesn’t require an add-on (Java) to run which means it will work on any device including tablets and phones.
Forum Updates

Forum module updates in Moodle 2.8 make it easier to follow discussion topics, reply to topics, navigate easier, and “Like” forum posts.

*Subscribe to individual forum discussions*

Moodle allows you to subscribe or unsubscribe to individual discussions.
**Easier navigation**

New links at the top of discussion pages allow students and instructors to click to the next or previous discussions.

**Single option scale for grading of posts**

Moodle 2.8 now supports single option scales. This allows you to place a scale in your course that simply says ‘Like’ or ‘Approve’ or ‘Helpful’ etc. This will create a column in the gradebook for keeping scoring or simply keeping track.

To add a single option scale to your forum navigate to:

1. Administration
2. Course administration
3. Grades
4. Grade administration
5. Scales and add a new scale.
6. Click Save changes and your scale will be available to use.
To add the scale to the forum, navigate back to your course homepage, click on the forum, and then go to the settings of your forum:

1. **Administration**
2. **Forum Administration**
3. **Edit settings**.
4. Within the Ratings section, next to Aggregation type, choose an aggregation (any aggregation will work).
5. In Scale category set Type to **Scale**.
6. In Scale category set Scale to your new scale.
7. Finally, click **Save and display**.

Back in your forum, click on a topic and you will see a dropdown list for rating each post.
To allow students to rate, navigate to:

1. **Administration** block
2. **Forum administration**
3. **Permissions**
4. Type “Rate Posts” into the filter.
5. Click the plus sign next to the roles with permission, choose student
6. Click **Allow**.

### Assignment Updates

**Attach Documents**

*The assignment activity in Moodle 2.8 has a new feature that allows teachers to attach files for students when setting up assignments, such as example submissions or answer templates. To attach a file to an assignment:*

1. **Turn editing on** in your course.
2. Add the assignment from the **Add a resource or activity** link, or choose to edit the settings of an existing assignment.
3. Drag and drop, or locate and **choose the file** you wish to attach within the Additional Files setting.
4. When your settings are modified as you wish, click a **Save** option at the bottom of the page.

Your students will see the attached document located just below the description. When they click on the document, they will be asked to open it, or save it.

**Word limit**

If you choose to have students type their assignment submission directly into Moodle using the Online Text feature, you can now set a word limit for the submission. Word limit works with the ATTO editor.
and not the optional TinyMCE editor used in previous Moodle versions. Word limit is accessed within the assignment’s settings within the Submission types group.

When students type in more than the allotted word limit and click submit they will be notified they are over the limit and given a chance to adjust their submission. Nothing can be submitted until the student meets the allotted word limit.

**Comment Inline**

When utilizing Online Text for submitting assignments, you can now comment right within the student’s submission and it will show immediately to the student as feedback. To do this:
1. In your assignment settings enable **Online Text**.
2. In the feedback section of the settings, change **Comment Inline** to **Yes**.
3. Finish your settings and click a **save** option at the bottom of the page.

To grade the assignment, click on the assignment and in the grading summary page, then:

1. Click **View/grade all submissions**.
2. In the assignment grading page, under the Grade column, click on the **grading icon** next to a student’s name. At the top of the new page, you will see the submission status for the student including their online text submission.
3. Under the submission you can **add comments** as in older versions of Moodle that are separate from the actual submission.

4. Below, you see another section called **Grade**. Here you can add feedback comments right within the submitted text. Moodle only allows you to comment inline once, so this is not a good option for versioning documents.
5. Click a **Save** option at the bottom. See note, right.

When checking their assignment, students will see the comments listed in the feedback section of the report. This feedback also gets passed along to the gradebook user report.

**Student Feedback Notification**

A new assignment setting within the notifications group allows you to utilize a checkbox to notify students of feedback. The option you choose will set the default value for the "Notify students" checkbox on the grading form.

**IMPORTANT:**
If you click Next rather than a save option, your comments will be gone as you proceed to the next student.
Improved Quiz Edit Screen and Completion Settings

The Edit Quiz page has been rewritten for improved accessibility, making it much easier to add and manage questions. The Edit Quiz page has an updated look with an Add setting that allows you to create a new question, add a question from the question bank, or add a random question.

The Edit quiz page also provides new icons for creating or deleting pages, and you can drag and drop questions in any order or to any page. The Order and Paging tab in older versions of Moodle no longer exists since everything can be done right on the Edit quiz page.

If you use the Moodle activity completion feature in your course, new settings allow you to signify the quiz as complete by requiring a passing grade or if the student has tried all available attempts.
Choice Activity Updates

The Choice activity now allows students the option to choose multiple items. This can be helpful in narrowing options down to several.

Event Monitoring

Course event monitoring allows instructors to receive notification when certain events take place in Moodle. Event monitoring can help keep the instructor alerted to certain cues that are taking place within the course. For example, an alert can be made to happen when a student has submitted to a quiz, forum, wiki, or feedback activity. An alert could notify when a student has exceeded the time limit for a quiz, or a student has added an entry to a course glossary.

For an event to be monitored, a rule is first created by the instructor. This rule specifies what the event is, how often it must happen before notification is sent out. Once a rule is created, enrolled users having the teacher role can subscribe and be notified when an event takes place. A notification may be a pop-up, email, or other chosen methods.
To create a rule:

In your course, go to:

1. Course administration
2. Reports
3. Click on Event monitoring rules.
4. In the Event monitoring rules page, click Add a new rule.

Setting the parameters for the rule

1. In the general settings page, give the new rule a name. This might be the name of the area you want to monitor plus the triggering event, such as Assignment submitted.
2. In the Area to monitor setting, choose the available area of Moodle you want monitored, such as Assignment.
3. In the Event setting, choose the available event for the area, such as: A submission has been submitted.
4. In the description, write the text that will be used when notification takes place. For example: This is a Moodle alert that an assignment has been submitted.

5. Notification threshold sets the number of events within a specified time period required for a notification message to be sent. Leaving this setting to one will notify each time.
6. The next setting allows you to decide how often Moodle will check to see if the threshold has been met. Leaving this at one, will set Moodle to check every minute.

7. The Notification message editor allows you to customize the notification sent out. This message can include the following placeholders:
   - Link to the location of the event {link}
   - Link to the area monitored {modulelink}
   - Rule name {rulename}
   - Description {description}
   - Event {eventname}

For example you may send the following:

8. Click Save changes.

Your event will list in the Event monitoring rules page. Now that you have created an event, you will need to subscribe to that event.

*To subscribe to an event:*

1. Click the Event monitoring link at the bottom of the Event monitoring rules page.
2. In the subscription page, select the appropriate course and to the far right of the listed rules, choose the instance you want to subscribe to. In this example, we’ll choose Assign 1.

3. Your current subscription is now listed at the top of the subscription page. Notice in the Instance column, Assign 1 is listed as the instance. To add another assignment, simply choose to subscribe to the rule again.
4. When a rule is met, a notification is sent to the subscriber.

Improved Conditional Activities and Restricted Access

Separate learning paths can be created for groups and even individual students using Moodle’s conditional activities and restricted access settings. These settings can be turned on in your course settings by navigating to:

1. Administration
2. Course Administration
3. Edit Settings
4. Under Completion tracking, change Enable completion tracking to Yes
5. Click Save Changes at the bottom.

Restricting access

Within the settings of any activity or resource, you will see a group of settings called Restrict access.

To add a restriction:

1. Click Add restriction.
2. A popup window will give a list of options.
   Choose the appropriate option from the list.
Most of the options were available in previous versions of Moodle, but the Restriction set choice is new and allows for choosing a set of nested restrictions that uses Boolean logic with the following options: must/must not, all/any, and or/and.

Clicking on the eyeball setting restricts the activity from student view entirely until conditions have been met. An open eyeball lets students see the activity with an explanation of what must be done to satisfy the restriction.
Activity Completion
When setting activity completion, the settings are mainly as in older versions of Moodle, but gradable activities have a new choice for requiring a grade. You can require grade (any grade), or you can require grade and also require it to be a passing grade, or simply that all available attempts have been completed.

Badges Improvements
There are two changes with using the Moodle badges feature. First, badges can now be completely deleted in Moodle by the instructor, even for those that have already earned the badge. Second, badges are now displayed on the course profile page.
Training Resources

Video Tutorials

Moodle Minute: https://lms.ndus.edu/course/view.php?id=314

Atomic Learning: Within Moodle, click on Atomic Learning located at your institution’s homepage, login, and search for *Moodle 2.7 – Instructor Training*. (Dickinson State University and Mayville State University only)

Websites

Moodle: https://docs.moodle.org/27/en/New_features
https://docs.moodle.org/28/en/New_features