

Managing Communication

Using Course Announcements


The Course announcement is a special type of Moodle forum (News forum). It is provided as part of the default template when a course is created and it is located in the top middle section of the course main page.

All users in your course are automatically subscribed to course announcements. When an announcement is posted via course announcements, an e-mail notification is sent to each user in the course. This can be an excellent way to ensure students are made aware of important course information, events or changes.

Note that if students have set their messaging notifications to not receive e-mail notifications, the e-mail will not be sent to them and you will not be notified of this.

Announcements will appear immediately in the course announcement forum, however, the e-mail notification will be delayed for 30 minutes before being sent for distribution. This delay will allow you to edit the announcement before the e-mail notification is sent. This delay period is system-wide and not configurable by course instructors. However, you can force the announcement e-mail to be sent immediately when you compose it.

Follow these steps to create a course announcement:

1. Click the **News Forum** link on your course homepage.
2. Click the **Add a new topic** button.
3. Enter a **Subject**, which will appear in the history list of course announcements. It is similar to an e-mail subject line.
4. Enter the announcement message in the **Message** text box. If the message will be lengthy, consider entering a short summary here and attaching a more complete document.
5. Drag a file from your hard drive and drop it in the marked area (dashed rectangle), or click  if you would like to attach a file with your post.
6. Click the **Mail now** checkbox if you want your email to be sent immediately. Otherwise, there will be a 30 minute delay in sending it out in order for you to make any changes.



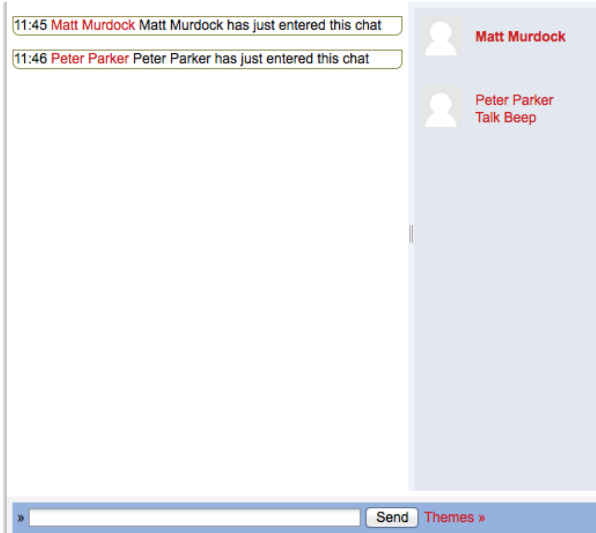
7. In the *Display period* section you may select when the announcement will be displayed. To enable the start and/or end dates, click the **Enable** box(es).

The screenshot shows a web-based form for creating a forum post. At the top, there is a header 'General news and announcements'. Below it, a section titled 'Your new discussion topic' contains a 'Subject*' text input field and a 'Message*' text area with a rich text editor toolbar. To the left of the message area are checkboxes for 'Discussion subscription' and 'Attachment'. Below the attachment section is a file upload area with a dashed border and a blue arrow pointing down, with the text 'You can drag and drop files here to add them.' and a note 'Maximum size for new files: Unlimited, maximum attachments: 1'. At the bottom left is a 'Mail now' checkbox. At the bottom center are two buttons: 'Post to forum' and 'Cancel'.

Click **Post to forum** at the bottom of the page to post the announcement. You will see a message indicating that you have 30 minutes to edit the post before participants in your course will receive an e-mail notification.

Using Chat Rooms

Chat allow your students to converse in real-time, meaning that they can communicate synchronously with other students in the Chat room. Chat rooms are a great way to have group discussions about a particular topic or host on-line Q&A sessions.



Follow the steps below to add a **Chat** activity to one or more of the sections on the course home page.

1. Click the **Turn editing on** button at the top right of the course home page.
2. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link in the course section where you want the Chat to be listed.
3. Select **Chat** from the Activities section and click the *Add* button.
4. Enter a desired name in the **Name of this chat room** field. This name will appear on the course home page as a link for students to click on.

5. Enter details or information related to the Chat activity in the **Description** box. This is what students will see when they access the Chat session.

The description text box is a good place to set expectations with your students. For example, you might want to inform them that the chat sessions will be recorded and made available later. If the chat should be based around a particular topic you can let them know here.

6. Use the **Next chat time** drop-down lists to schedule the date and time when the chat room will open. The Chat will still be available to students at any time but this option will post a calendar entry to act as a reminder for the Chat.
7. Select the appropriate option from the **Repeat sessions** drop-down list to specify whether the Chat session is ongoing and how often the Chat repeats. This selection is used as an indication to students of when the chat room will be available.
8. Select the appropriate option from the **Save past sessions** drop-down list to indicate how many days the chat transcript will be available online for others to view. Saving the transcript could be useful for group work discussions or for you to review the Chat session and monitor behaviour.
9. Select *Yes* or *No* from the **Everyone can view past sessions** drop-down list. This option controls whether students can view the transcript or if it is only available to

the instructor.

10. In the **Common module settings** select the appropriate group setting if groups have been configured in your course. Refer to the Groups and Groupings training page for setting up groups.

11. Select the appropriate restrictions to apply from the **Restrict access** section. Restrict access options allow you to set restrictions on an activity or resource by date & time, or by conditions related to previous activities. Refer to the Restricting access to resource and activity training page for setting up restriction criterion.
12. Select the appropriate completion tracking criterion from the **Activity completion** section. This feature helps students keep track of activities they have completed. Refer to the Using Completion Tracking training page for setting up completion criterion.
13. Click **Save and return to the course** to finish adding the Chat activity.