



D2L Groups Quickstart Guide

The **Groups** tool is located in the **Edit Course** area.

Understanding How Groups are Created

Before setting up groups you should know how you want them to be organized. A number of things can affect how users are enrolled in groups:

- Were groups set up before or after you enrolled users to the course?
- Are users auto-enrolled in groups?
- Are course participants placed in groups randomly?
- Can users self-enroll in groups?
- What Enrollment Type did you choose?

Tip: In most cases it is better to set up groups after the majority of users are enrolled in your course. This gives you a better idea of how many users you are organizing and how many groups you need. Setting up groups after enrollment could also ensure better distribution of users between groups.

Warning: In order for users to be enrolled in groups automatically the **Can be auto-enrolled** option must be enabled.

Enrollment Types

A specified number of groups are created, which you can add any number of users to through the **Enroll Users** page. There are five options.

1. **# of Groups - No Auto Enrollments**

- Use this enrollment type when you know how many groups you want to create and which users you want in each group. This option could be used when you have a teaching model that divides course participants into specific learning levels or when you want to divide users by skill or interests.

2. **# of Groups** - A specified number of groups are created.

- If '**Can be auto-enrolled**' is turned on, they are added using a brick laying algorithm, regardless of whether they enrolled before or after the groups were created. For example, if a class has 23 users and 5 groups, the first user is added to Group 1, the second to Group 2, etc. The sixth user returns the enrollment sequence to Group 1. Groups 1, 2, and 3 have 5 users and Groups 4 and 5 have 4 users. If a new user enrolls later, they are put in Group 4.

- If '**Can be auto-enrolled**' is turned off, the specified number of groups are created with no users enrolled in them. You must manually enroll users using the **Enroll Users** page.

3. **Groups of #** - The minimum number of groups needed to place users in groups of a specified maximum size. More groups are created when they are needed to accommodate users.

- Use this enrollment type when you know how many groups you want to create, but want the system to place users in groups for you. This option could be used when you want group membership to be indiscriminate, or when classroom, resource, or teaching assistant availability restricts the number of groups you can have.

- If users are enrolled before groups are set up and **Can be auto-enrolled** is turned on, users are added using a brick laying algorithm. For example, if a maximum group size of 5 users is chosen for a class of 23, than 5 groups are created. The first user is added to Group 1, the second to Group 2, etc. The sixth user returns the enrollment sequence to Group 1. Groups 1, 2 and 3 have 5 users and Groups 4 and 5 have 4 users. If a new user enrolls later, they are put in Group 4.

- Note: If you have **Auto Enroll New Users** selected and all of the existing groups have reached their maximum size, new users are added to a new group. Because there is no way to know how many new users will join, all new users are added to the same group until it is full. This is called a bucket-filling algorithm because the limits of one group must be met before another group is started.

- If users are enrolled after groups are set up, users are added to groups using a bucket-filling algorithm because the system can not determine how many groups in total are needed. For example, if a maximum group size of 5 users is chosen for a class in which 23 users initially enroll, the first five users are added to Group 1, the sixth through tenth user to Group 2, etc. After 23 users are enrolled, groups 1-4 have 5 users and Group 5 has 3 users.

4. **Groups of # - Self Enrollment:** The minimum number of groups needed to accommodate users in groups of a specified maximum size are created automatically. Users choose the group they want to enroll in from their **My Groups** page, accessible from the **Classlist**.

- Use this enrollment type when you know how many users you want in each group, but you want to allow users to choose their own groups. This option could be used when you want users to choose

their groups based on friendship, learning style, schedules, or geographic location.

- Note: If users are not already enrolled in your course, then only one group is initially created. You can use the **Edit Category** page to add additional groups. You might want to add additional groups even if users are already enrolled to ensure all users have options when forming groups.


5. **# of Groups - Self Enrollment** - A specified number of groups are created, which users enroll in from their **My Groups** page, accessible from the **Classlist**.

- Use this enrollment type when you want to make a specific number of groups available for users to join. This option could be used for organizing groups on specific topics, which users could join based on interest, or for creating groups that are responsible for specific aspects of a larger project, which users could join based on knowledge or task preferences.

Creating a Group Category

Categories are required in order to create a group. Categories are a way of organizing and managing related groups. For example, you could have a different category for Assignment 1, Assignment 2, Seminars, Remedial Help, and Book Reviews.

Create a Category

1. From the **Manage Groups** page, click the  **New Category** icon.
2. Enter a **Category Name**.
3. Enter a **Description** of the category.
4. Select an **Enrollment Type**. See Enrollment Types for more information on enrollment types.
5. Specify the **Number of Groups** to create or the **Number of Users** per group depending on the Enrollment Type you chose.
6. Select **Auto-Enroll New Users** if you want users to be enrolled in groups automatically.
7. Select **Randomize** users in groups if you want users to be placed in groups randomly. If this option is not chosen, users are placed alphabetically based on the classlist.
8. Select **Setup Forums** if you want to associate discussion areas with the groups in the category.
9. Select **Setup Dropbox** if you want to associate dropbox folders with the groups in the category.

Create Group Restricted Discussion Areas

When you create a new category with the Setup Discussion Areas option checked, you are automatically taken to the Create Restricted Discussion Areas page. From this page you can create a separate topic for each group within an existing or new forum.

1. **Select** the Forum you want from the drop-down list if you have already created a forum in the Discussions tool.
2. Click the **New Forum** link to create a new forum for the category. (See Creating a discussion forum.)
3. Click **Add Another** if you want to add more than one discussion forum.
4. Click **Create** or **Create and Next** when finished.

Note: Clicking the **Skip** button takes you to the next page in the Groups setup process without creating any restricted discussion areas.

Edit Group Enrollment in Restricted Discussion Areas

You can edit group enrollment in restricted discussion forums and topics from the **Groups** tool. To add, edit, or delete forums or topics restricted by group you must use the **Discussions** tool. (See **Setting** group and section restrictions for a discussion forum or topic, for more information.)

1. From the **Manage Groups** page, click the **name of the category** that contains the discussion forum you want to edit.
2. From the **Edit Category** page, click the **Edit Discussion Restrictions** link.
3. **Select** the **Forum** you want to make changes to in the **Forum** drop-down list or select to edit multiple forums at once.
4. Use the check boxes in the **Edit Restrictions** grid to modify group enrollment in discussion forums and topics.
5. Select **Automatically** create restricted topics if you want to add topics to the forums.
6. Click **Save**.

Create Group Dropbox

If you select the **Setup Dropbox** option, you are automatically taken to the **Create Dropbox** folders page. Creating a folder from this page creates a folder for each of the groups in the category. Note: Clicking the **Skip** button takes you to the next page in the Groups setup process without creating any shared dropbox folders.

Create Group Restricted Lockers

If you select the **Setup Locker** option, locker areas are automatically created for each group in the category.