

## Moodle Instructor's Checklist and Suggested Best Practices

Created by the ECC Distance Learning Committee for December 2015. Updated 5/17/2018.

In this document the terms *topic*, *section*, and *module* all refer to a numbered part of a Moodle course.

- When a blank Moodle course is created, the default name for such a part is "**Topic 1**", "**Topic 2**", etc.
- Since every existing Moodle course started out as a blank course, many still have that default part name.

Checklist for preparing a new Moodle course before the students see it.

- Verify that all dates listed in the course have been updated for the new upcoming term. This is especially crucial for quiz opening dates and closing dates.
- Verify that your name, contact info, etc. are correct in the syllabus
- Verify that you have provided a schedule with a list of the due dates for completing required activities during the term.
- Be sure the course grade book's method of calculating the "Course total" agrees with the method described in the syllabus with regard to any weighted grades.
- (Fully OL courses only) Be sure the Moodle Enrollment Verification Assignment for entering your course is set to close on the 10% census date at 11:55 pm and not 11:59 pm. In other words, "Close the quiz" should be "23:55," not "23:59." This gives the server extra time to record the attempt before midnight.

Suggested best practices for Moodle courses

- Suspend all no-shows as soon as possible after the 10% date has passed to prevent them from continuing to work in your course. Instructions on how to suspend a "NS" or a withdrawn student are on page 5 (the last page).
- (Fully OL courses only) Before declaring someone who did not complete the Enrollment Verification Assignment as a NS, check to see if that student completed some other qualifying activity prior to the census deadline, such as a quiz, forum, or assignment upload.
- In Moodle, using "Restrict access" with quizzes is not usually necessary, although it is great for anything else. The "Timing" quiz settings alone are normally all you need to control access to a quiz. The only exceptions to this might be on an Enrollment Verification Assignment that you want to hide after it closes, or when you want to prevent students from seeing some other quiz before the Enrollment Verification Assignment is completed.
- Suggestion (especially for fully OL courses): Contact your online students at the beginning of each week to remind them of what coursework they will be expected to do during that week and of anything that must be done by the end of that week, such as tests, assignments, etc. The lack of being in a physical classroom makes it less likely that online students will remember to check on these things.

- ❑ Suggestion: Try to answer emails from students as soon as you read them. The maximum allowed time to respond is two business days.
- ❑ Suggestion: In Course settings, use “Onetopic format” as the “Course format” so that each topic is accessible from its own tab. Here is a suggestion for the settings.

▼ Course format

Format ⓘ Onetopic format ▼

Number of sections 8 ▼

Hidden sections ⓘ Hidden sections are shown in collapsed form ▼

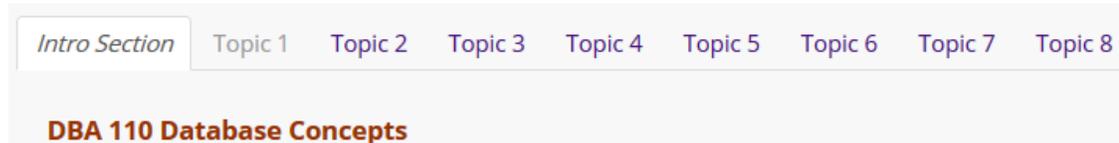
Hide tabs bar ⓘ No ▼

Visualization mode of section 0 ⓘ As tab ▼

Use topic summary as template ⓘ No, display as default ▼

Show icon in resource links in summary ⓘ No ▼

The result, at the top of your course’s main page, will look something like this.



- ❑ Suggestion: Use “Restrict access” with each course module so that it opens (appears) exactly when it should. This is easier than having to go in and open each one manually. Instructions on how to set “Restrict access” are on the next page.
- ❑ Suggestion: Do not hide/close completed course modules, because hiding a module also hides any grades in that module from the students.
- ❑ Consider using the anti-cheating tools that are available (Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor) for Moodle quizzes, especially on heavily weighted quizzes in a Moodle course. Always provide a no-credit practice quiz with unlimited attempts to give students the opportunity to become comfortable using the tools. Never use the LockDown Browser with your Enrollment Verification Assignment.
- ❑ Consider using Camtasia Relay (the easier one to use) or Camtasia Studio (more advanced) to create audio and video files of your lecture/demonstrations. These files make an online course seem more like a face-to-face course. The recommended *maximum* duration for each video is 15 minutes.

- Consider using the Turnitin plagiarism checker for any writing assignments. Following are four links on how to use it for instructors and for students.

How to create a Turnitin assignment -

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gaJzSyV1iZjruB5\\_rwlHo6lh9TL\\_C4wg](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gaJzSyV1iZjruB5_rwlHo6lh9TL_C4wg)

How to read an originality report -

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jolKK5jLPu5ReqkJD7v9tnufEsR5Vtwj>

How to Provide Feedback to Students -

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FexjGFomO9osQU2SV3LDBkcdSnI3ey9L>

(Post this link in your course for your students)

How to submit a Turnitin Assignment, view originality reports, and access instructor feedback –

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Q4252GztXW8opW7PMGMaiZYiG4mnh7Uy>

- Suggestion: If your course content includes Microsoft Word or PowerPoint files, inform your students about the free Word and PowerPoint viewers that are available online. Not all students have Microsoft Office and they should not assume that they are expected to buy it just to view and print Office files.
- (Fully OL courses only) Consider setting up your course so that, when a student enters it for the first time, the Enrollment Verification Assignment is the only thing they see, other than the syllabus, and nothing else becomes visible until it is completed. On page 4 are instructions on how to do this. You may need help with this from your department chair or from the Moodle administrator, [worsleya@edgecombe.edu](mailto:worsleya@edgecombe.edu).

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### **Setting “Restrict access” to Automatically Open a Module**

1. Use your schedule of due dates as a guide for finding the date when one part of the course will be finished and the next part needs to appear. This needs to be set for all modules before students see your course for the first time.
2. To set the date when students will be able to see a topic/section/module
  - a. Turn editing on.  
To the right of the topic’s name, click “Edit,” then click “Edit topic.”
  - b. On the left, click “Restrict access,” then click “Add restriction”
  - c. Choose “Date” in the “Add restriction” window
  - d. Click the "eye" symbol to close it so that the item will remain hidden until its opening date arrives.

- e. Enter the date and time you want this portion of the course to appear and then “Save changes.” Below is a “Restrict access” date setting that causes a module to appear to students on January 21, 2015 at 12:05 am.

The screenshot shows the 'Restrict access' configuration page in Moodle. A callout box labeled "Eye symbol is closed" points to a closed eye icon next to the 'Date' field. The 'Date' field is set to 'from 21 January 2015 00:05'. Below the field is an 'Add restriction...' button. At the bottom are 'Save changes' and 'Cancel' buttons.

(The following procedure is for OL courses. It applies to **Moodle 3.4**)

### Forcing Students to Do the **Enrollment Verification Assignment** First

For best results, use the Chrome browser to [view the video](#) (4 minutes 26 secs)

Now that we have standardized on using the **Enrollment Verification Assignment** activity for 10% census reporting, here are the instructions for preventing students from seeing anything else in the course until they have completed that activity. If you do not already have the **EVA** in your course and need the instructions on how to get it, email me at [worsleya@edgecombe.edu](mailto:worsleya@edgecombe.edu)

**General overview.** The following must all be done *before* students see the course for the first time. More detailed instructions follow, but here is the basic idea.

- Step 1. In the introductory topic/section/module where the Enrollment Verification Assignment is located, set a “Restrict access” rule for every item (quiz, forum, label, etc.) that you want to hide.
- Step 2. Set that same access restriction for any other topics/modules in the course that will be visible before the census date.

Here is how to set “Restrict access” so that the visibility of a course item is determined by the **Enrollment Verification Assignment** grade. (At the top of this document is a link to a video that demonstrates this.)

Turn editing on for the course.

**Step 1.** Do the following for each **item** (including labels) in the General/Introductory topic *except* for the **Enrollment Verification Assignment**.

- A. Click “Edit,” then “Edit settings.”
- B. Scroll down and click “Restrict access”
- C. Click “Add restriction...”
- D. In the small “Add restriction” window that appears, click “Grade” and you will see this

#### ▼ Restrict access

Access restrictions Student must match the following

Grade Choose...

must be  $\geq$  [ ] %

must be  $<$  [ ] %

“eye” symbol

- E. To the right of “Grade” click “Choose...” and click **Enrollment Verification Assignment** in the list that drops down
- F. Click the “eye” symbol to make this item invisible until the **EVA** is done
- G. Click the empty checkbox to the left of “**must be  $\geq$** ” to put a check mark there
- H. Enter a zero (0) into the text box. Your screen should now look like this.

#### ▼ Restrict access

Access restrictions Student must match the following

Grade Enrollment Verification A

must be  $\geq$  0 %

must be  $<$  [ ] %

“eye” is closed

- I. Click “Save and return to course”
  - J. *Repeat*, starting at “A” of **Step 1** for each remaining item in the introductory topic, *except* for the **EVA** activity.
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**Step 2.** Next, do the following for each **topic** that will be visible to students before the census date.

- Click “Edit,” then “Edit topic.”
- Scroll down and click “Restrict access”
- Click “Add restriction...”
- In the small “Add restriction” window that appears, click “Grade” and you will see this.

▼ Restrict access

Access restrictions Student must match the following

Grade Choose...

must be  $\geq$  [ ] %

must be  $<$  [ ] %

- To the right of “Grade” click “Choose...” and click **Enrollment Verification Assignment** in the list that drops down
- Click the “eye” symbol to make this item invisible until the **EVA** is done
- Click the empty checkbox to the left of “**must be  $\geq$** ” to put a check mark there
- Enter a zero (0) into the text box. Your screen should now look like this.

▼ Restrict access

Access restrictions Student must match the following

Grade Enrollment Verification A

must be  $\geq$  0 %

must be  $<$  [ ] %

- Click “Save changes”
- Repeat, starting at “A” of **Step 2** for each topic that would normally be visible before the census date, *except* for the General/Introductory topic, which has already been done in step 1.

These “Restrict access” settings will copy over with the course into future semesters and should not need to be done again, except for new items you add in the introductory topic.

## Suspending or Un-enrolling a “NS” or “W” Student

For each student listed in **Administration → Users → Enrolled users**, there is a row like the one shown below. Click the round, gear-shaped icon on the far right. It enables you to change the student’s status from “Active” to “Suspended.” Once you make this change and “Save changes,” the student will no longer be able to see your course. To completely un-enroll them, click the “x” symbol instead, as shown below.



1. To *Suspend*, click here
2. Change the Status from “Active” to “Suspended,”
3. Save changes

To *Un-enroll*, click here (the “x” symbol) instead, and then click “Continue” to remove student from course.