

M05 - Organise blocks

Keywords: navigation, news, settings, calendar, supplementary, contact details.

What are they?

Blocks display information such as navigation menus, calendar information, latest news, who else is online etc.

Blocks can be added to the right side of the Moodle course homepage, where the main course content appears.

Why use them?

Blocks contain supplementary information to what's contained in the centre of the page (e.g. you might add contact details) and some blocks help your students to navigate the materials more easily.

Who can use them?

Tutors and course administrators (who have course editing rights) can add blocks.

Students can view some blocks - to check what blocks they see, **switch role to... student mode** (available from the settings menu).

Before I start...

Note, that blocks will appear at the bottom of the page on smaller devices and also when the browser window is reduced in width. Therefore, you might like to minimise the number of blocks you include on your page.

You can choose to add blocks to the left, right or both sides of your Moodle course homepage and also on some activities and resources.

Meeting the baseline

The [UCL E-Learning Baseline](#) suggests the following for **Structure**:

- **1.3 Include navigation aids** - Suggested blocks to add to your Moodle course include [Activities](#), Latest News, Recent Activity, Library Resources, Library Search and People.

How do I add them?

1. Switch editing on.
2. In edit mode, the last block on the right will be **Add a block**, which contains a drop-down list of all the blocks you can add to your page. Any that are missing may already be on your page.
3. The new block should appear at the bottom of the right hand column.
4. Click the cog icon to **configure the block**, choose the configuration link from the drop-down menu to load the configuration page.
 - Note: Blocks that cannot be configured will not have this icon.
 - Example:
 - When you configure the HTML block you can enter a **Block Title** or leave this blank to hide the title (e.g. if you want an untitled graphic).
 - In the content section, you can add text, graphics, links etc. as we have seen before.

5. Once you have finished configuring the block click **Save changes** at the bottom of the page and you will be returned to the course homepage
6. To **move the block**, click and drag the four-way arrow icon to move the block to another place in the right column. Alternatively, you can click and release this same move icon to see a list of locations the block can be moved to. Click on one of these options to move the block below it.
7. To **delete a block**, click the cog icon and from the drop-down menu choose to remove it.
 - Note: If you delete a HTML block you may want to copy the text to a text file before deleting it, so you can easily add it back again in future. All other blocks can be brought by simply re-adding

Organising Blocks

- Place navigation items to the top-right.
- Cluster similar blocks together e.g. **Calendar** with **Upcoming Events**.
- Remove any blocks you will not be using as they clutter the screen and may confuse students.

Further help

[Further guidance on Blocks is available from moodledocs.](#)

If you find any inaccurate or missing information you can even update this yourself (it's a communal wiki).

If you have a specific question about the tool please [contact the Digital Education team](#).

Caution

At times, it may seem that your blocks have 'disappeared'. In most instances, the blocks have been docked. Refer to the section above for information on docking and undocking blocks.

Display all course sections in the navigation block (off by default)

The **navigation** block doesn't display course sections by default. It is recommended that course editors modify the navigation block settings, so it displays course sections to students and staff alike.

To display all course sections in the navigation block:

1. **Turn editing on** and **click the cog icon** in the **Navigation** block and choose '**Configure Navigation block**'.
2. Next to '**Generate navigation for the following**' choose '**Everything**'.
3. Click '**Save changes**'.

Examples and case studies

- None at this time.

Questions & Answers

- None at this time.

Further information

There are many blocks available - here is a useful descriptive list of UCL Moodle blocks.

Here are a few blocks in particular that we recommend for New Moodle:

- **Latest Announcements** - displays the top announcements
- **Common Timetable** - links to students' timetables
- **Library Resources** - links to the ReadingList@UCL for this course
- **Library Search** - searches the Library catalogue
- **Recent Activity** - lists recent changes that have occurred on the course
- **Quickmail** - a staff only service for emailing individuals and groups enrolled on the course.

Some blocks that we recommended in the past have been made redundant by tabs and drop-down menus that now appear at the top of the screen when you're in Moodle. These include:

- **Activities** - replaced by **This course**
- **People** - replaced by **This course**
- **Calendar** and **Upcoming events** - replaced by **Events** tab

Also, see:

- [M05a - Moodle course blocks list](#)
- [M05b - Navigation block](#)
- [M05c - Quickmail Block](#)
- [M05d - Common Timetable block](#)
- [M05e - Activities block](#)
- [M05f - Remote RSS Feeds Block](#)
- [M05g - Online users block](#)
- [M05h - Free Text \(HTML\) block](#)
- [M05i - Administration \(formerly Settings\) block](#)