M16 - Blog

Keywords: blog, post, reflection.

What is it?

A blog or 'web log' is a popular and easy-to-use form of public online journal, used as a platform for comment and reflection in a wide range of areas including education. Blogs are typically displayed in reverse chronological order with the newest posts at the top, and feature simple editing tools via a text box editor. Posts can incorporate text, links, images and videos, and visitors may be allowed to comment on each post.

Common blog applications used by educators are Blogger and Wordpress. Moodle also has a blogging tool which is user-based. Each user has his or her own blog which is not specific to any particular course.

Why use it?

Blogs can be used in a variety of ways and for many different purposes, but within an educational context they are most frequently used for reflective learning activities. Students might use a blog to record observations from throughout a project or module to inform their approach to summative assessments. Tutors, meanwhile, could use them to summarise class-based learning or disseminate information to a whole cohort.

Who can use it?

- Tutors
- Individual students.

Before I start...

An alternative to using the Moodle Blogs, if it doesn't meet your needs, is setting up student access to a **UCL Blog** instead. Once your blog has been created and you have granted them access to your blog, students can login and create blog posts, which they can then share with others. Simply **link to your blog** from your Moodle course.

Whichever blogging tool you use, think about:

- The nature of your task: what are learners being asked to do?
- Is this task appropriate for delivery via the Moodle Blog, which is user-based and not specific to any single course?

Meeting the baseline

The **UCL E-Learning Baseline** suggests the following for **Orientation**:

- **2.2 Explain participation requirements**
    - Identify which activities are compulsory and optional
    - Provide an **indicator of effort** (such as timings or page counts) for all compulsory tasks
    - Explain how students are expected to use UCL and external e-learning tools. This PowerPoint Induction template provides a starting point. Wholly online courses might provide this information as a screen-cast video, with a voice over

- Link to **instructions** for any e-learning tools that students are expected to use.

For **Student Active Participation** it is suggested that:

- **9.1 Students can share learning resources** either individually or collaboratively using online tools (such as wikis, glossaries, databases and discussion forums).

How do I set one up?

Add a Blog entry quick guide

1. To add a blog entry, click your name on the top right of the screen, select **Profile** from the dropdown menu, **Blog entries** under Miscellaneous, and **Add a new entry**
2. In the Add a new entry page, add an **Entry title** then write the content in the **Blog entry body** field using the text editor
3. Choose who should be able to see the entry:
   a. Yourself (so your blog entry is private)
   b. Anyone on your site
4. Select any appropriate **tags** (key words) for your entry
5. Click **Save changes**.

Editing blog entries

1. Click **Edit** at the bottom of the entry to return the entry settings. The entry can also be deleted completely using the **Delete** link.

Viewing others' blog entries

1. To view the blog entries of other students, locate the **Navigation block** and click the **Participants** link. You will now be able to reach the individual profiles (and blogs) of other learners
2. If a blogging task is to be part of a particular course, the **Blog Menu block** provides useful extra functions and is worth adding to the course page (see Miniguide M07 Organising Blocks)
3. Another blog-related block is **Blog Tags** which displays a list of blog tags (keywords describing a blog entry) where font size visually indicates how many blogs are tagged with that keyword. The more frequently used blog tags appear in a larger font size and the least used appear in smaller fonts. This format is sometimes called a "tag cloud". The aim is to visually identify what are the most common subjects blogged about
4. RSS feeds from external blogs, such as Wordpress, can also be added so that entries are automatically included in your Moodle blog. Go to the **Settings** tab, then **Profile settings**, **Blogs**, **Blog RSS feed.** In the **URL** box, add the RSS feed of the blog you wish to register.
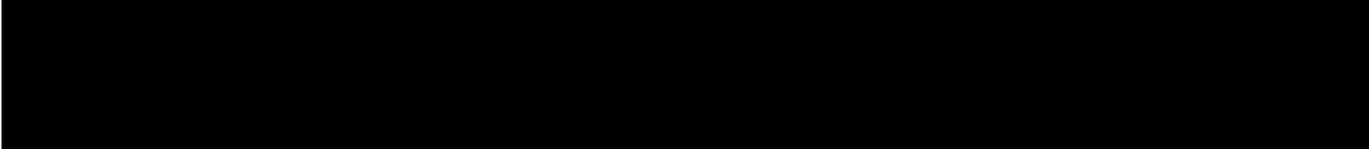
> ⓘ **Further help**
>
> Further guidance on Blog settings is available from MoodleDocs.
>
> If you find any inaccurate or missing information you can even update this yourself (it's a communal wiki).
>
> If you have a specific question about the tool please contact the Digital Education team.

Caution

Remember that each Moodle user has their own blog and this is not specific to any particular course. As such, everyone in Moodle can see the blog posts made unless they are marked as private.

Examples and case studies

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Questions & Answers

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Further information

More information about the Moodle Blog, including its settings, use, and an FAQ, can be found on MoodleDocs.

Editing blog entries

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