



# **Caribbean Graduate School of Theology**

## Teaching Online at CGST: A Lecturer's Manual

### **Passion, Mission, Vision & Core Values**

A lecturer called to serve at CGST is expected to teach with the mission, vision and core values of the institution in mind. These values are held in high regard and as an institution informs our approach to teaching in the online and face to face contexts.

Listed below are our mission, vision and core values, which lecturers are encouraged to integrate into their mode of delivery.

#### **PASSION**

To have a transforming impact on Church and Society by providing a teaching/learning experience that integrates Biblical principles and academic excellence

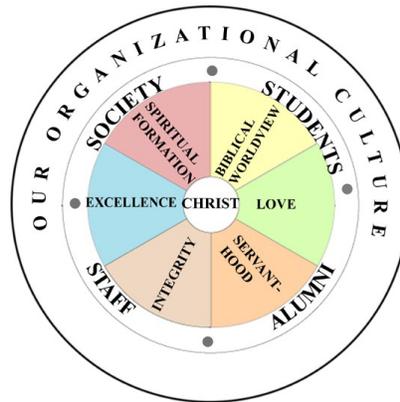
#### **VISION**

An ever-increasing number of Godly men and women, deployed in the Caribbean and beyond who will have transforming impact in Church and Society.

#### **MISSION**

To provide Christians with quality and Christ-centered graduate level training, for the strengthening of the Church, the transformation of Society in the Caribbean and beyond, for the glory of God.

## CORE VALUES



Our six core values are:

1. BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW
2. LOVE
3. SERVANTHOOD
4. INTEGRITY
5. EXCELLENCE
6. SPIRITUAL FORMATION

These are the values which we encourage our lecturers to exemplify as they participate in the fulfilment of the institutions, passion, mission and vision.

### Technology Skills

In order to fulfil the institution's mandate, lecturers are expected to display the following minimum level of technological competencies.

Our expectation is that the lecturer who joins CGST will meet basic computer literacy standards as we do not provide such training for staff in this area. Consequently, we expect knowledge of the following skills;

1. Be proficient in the use of email
2. Be able to use video conferencing tools such as Skype, Zoom or Google Meet.
3. Be able to manage files and folders stored electronically:
  - a. *Copy and Paste*, move files between folders (*Cut and Paste*)
  - b. Rename files and folders
  - c. Creating new folders and moving between file folders - for file storage
  - d. Can find and retrieve files
  - e. Able to upload and download files

4. Be comfortable using the Internet:
  - a. Can open and close tabs and navigate between them
  - b. Move between different websites and pages
  - c. Submitting forms online
5. Be competent using a document processor such as Microsoft Word at an intermediary level
6. To manage your login and password

## 1. Overview

This document is supplemental to the online video tutorials that lecturers of blended and online courses are required to take prior to teaching online at CGST. These tutorials will be available as a link on the institution's website and through the CGST Online Campus Moodle platform.

The tutorials will provide updated procedures the institution has incorporated into our online teaching approach. Much of this content comes from the Graduate Institute Geneva which based its manual on the Moodle 2.7 documentation at [www.docs.moodle.org](http://www.docs.moodle.org). However, we are currently at Moodle 3.6. Nonetheless, the information is still relevant and applicable.

### What is Moodle

Moodle is an open source Course Management System or a Learning Management System (LMS) available as an online platform where educators can create dynamic, robust, courses or learning environment.

Moodle consists of a combination of activities and resources which can be combined creatively into a unique learning experience with which students can engage. Each resource and activity can build on the last to make the path to knowledge more engaging.

## 2. How to Teach Effectively in Moodle

According to Boettcher, the overall knowledge of what works effectively in teaching and learning online has been rapidly growing and can be daunting. His ten best practices for teaching online are as follows:

**Best Practice 1:** Be Present at the Course Site. Extensively using communication tools such as forums, announcements, and messaging in the LMS is a sign to students that the lecturer cares about them, who they are and the questions they ask. This active engagement creates a sense of the lecturer being “present” for the mentoring process that teaching also entails.

Face-to-face classes if interactive, tends to lead to a sense of community. Likewise, with engagement and the lecturer being “present” a sense of community can be fostered online. Specifying when the lecturer will be online for actual live engagement, whether even by email, messaging in the LMS, chat, virtual classroom (such as through Zoom) has proven invaluable to students, according to the research in this area.

**Best Practice 2:** Create a supportive online course community. To develop community in online courses entails designing the course from the beginning to have almost equal amounts of dialogue of student to student, student to lecturer, and student to resources interactions.

The online lecturer/ instructor aims to develop three types of presence - teaching presence, social presence and cognitive/content presence.

The lecturer begins the course with a personal introductory post with various types of information including professional qualifications, research areas of interest, as well as personal information such as family, pets, and so forth. Also, a photo could be included. A short description of one’s approach to teaching would be helpful.

He or she creates and encourages student participation in a general open student discussion forum where requests for help can be made to fellow students and the instructor.

The lecturer facilitates small groups such as, study groups for student mentoring and exchange on various topics such as approaches to assignments completion and such issues.

Another type of forum could be one focused on solving problems, on building coping skills and general peer support which would be monitored by the students themselves.

**Best Practice 3:** Share a set of expectations which are clear for your students and yourself concerning (1) how you will communicate and (2) how much time students should be working on the course each week.

These expectations are essential. Knowing what to expect from the lecturer and knowing what is expected of the students sets the tone to allow for quality engagement. With set times for communication agreed upon before the course, adjustments can be made once the students are informed ahead of time. For example, lecturers are required to respond to student queries within 24 hours. These expectations give structure to the communication between faculty and students.

The need to spend quality time in the course material is just as necessary online as it is face-to-face so to have students agree on how much time they will spend working on the course material is critical.

**Best Practice 4:** Use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work-experience activities.

**Best Practice 5:** Use both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Synchronous activities occur in real time, live. One example is an online live meeting/lecture. Asynchronous activities, such as discussion forums, are those that take place over a period of time, instead of occurring in real time.

**Best Practice 6:** Early in the course - (about week 1 for month-long courses or week 3, if it is a two-month course) ask for informal feedback such as "How is the course going?" and "Do you have any suggestions?"

**Best Practice 7:** Prepare Discussion Posts that Invite Questions, Discussions, Reflections and Responses.

**Best Practice 8:** Focus on content resources and applications and links to current events and examples that are easily accessed from learner's computers.

**Best Practice 9:** Combine core concept learning with customized and personalized learning.

**Best Practice 10:** Plan a good closing and wrap-up activity for the course.

## Conclusion

Traditionally, the focus was on content, and the lecturer was completing the course material in preparation for student engagement with the next faculty member and course in line. For online learning, the dynamic has shifted to the focus on the learner. Boettcher (2013, 1-8) notes,

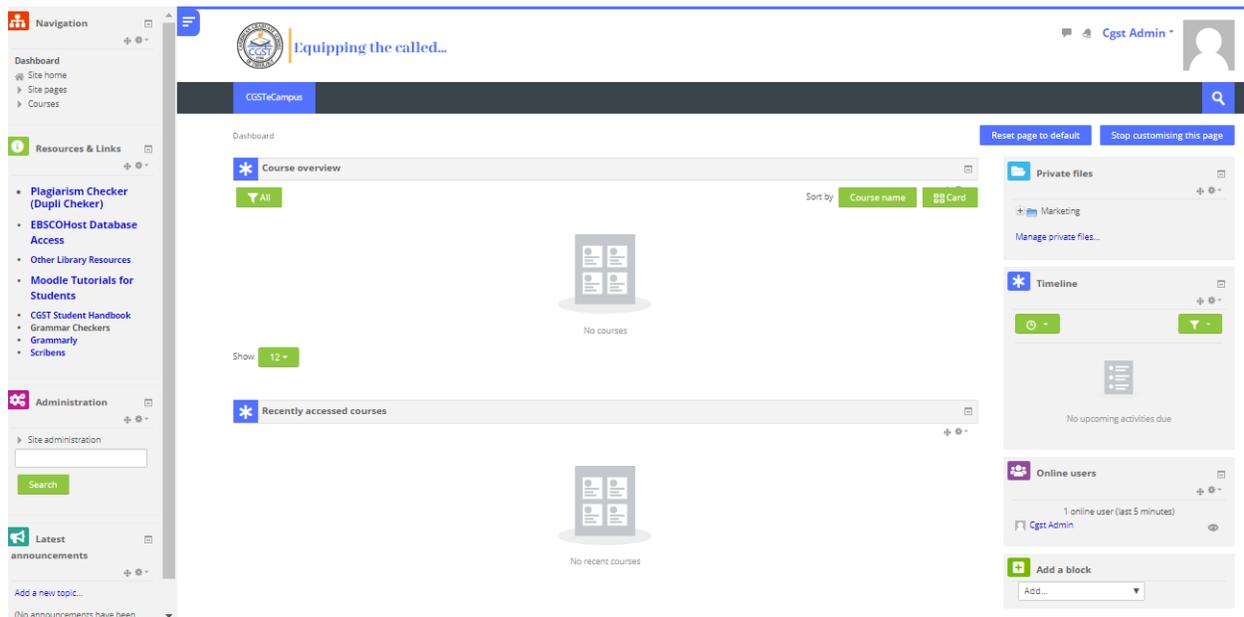
*A major drawback with designing for content as a priority is that it focuses attention on what the faculty member is doing, thinking and talking about and not on the interaction and engagement of students with the core concepts and skills of a course. The new focus on learners encourages a focus on learners as a priority. The new focus on the learner is to develop a habit of asking, what is going on inside the learner's head? How much of the content is being integrated into their knowledge base? How much of the content and the tools can he/she actually use? What are students thinking and how did they arrive at their respective positions?*

This learner focus is a new paradigm and one that requires a shift in how we perceive teaching and learning.

### 3. Navigating the Course

The default interface of a Moodle course contains blocks. A Block in Moodle is an item that a lecturer/instructor can add to the left or right of the Moodle course page. These provide extra information or links to aid learning. A teacher can add blocks by turning editing mode which can be done from the top right corner of the page or the Administration block.

Along with the Administration block, there is the Navigation Block (a default Moodle block), Resources & Links (created by CGST) and other Moodle blocks such as Time line, Online Users and Latest Announcements. Please see the example below.



Teachers can add block as they see fit by clicking on “Add a block” on the Home page of the institution and then clicking on.



## Switch role to:

This option allows a user to switch temporarily to another role in Administration by clicking on "switch role to" so that they can see what the course would look like to someone with that role.

**WARNING!** This facility does not always give you a true picture of what the course would look like to someone with that role. It is recommended you have a "test" user with the appropriate role who can be used to give a more accurate view.

## 4. Course Settings

The screenshot displays a course calendar interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a menu icon, a search bar containing "debate", and a "test" user selection. Below the navigation bar, the calendar is organized into weekly segments. Each segment has a date range, an "Add an activity or resource" button, and an "Edit" button. The first segment, "11 October - 17 October", contains three activities: "Assignment 1", "dating", and "Book Review". The "Book Review" activity has a description: "Write a 3-page review of Book Title Here".

Week	Start Date	End Date	Activities	Buttons
1	11 October	17 October	Assignment 1, dating, Book Review (Write a 3-page review of Book Title Here)	Edit, Add an activity or resource
2	18 October	24 October		Add an activity or resource, Edit
3	25 October	31 October		Add an activity or resource, Edit
4	1 November	7 November		Add an activity or resource, Edit
5	8 November	14 November		Add an activity or resource, Edit
6	15 November	21 November		Add an activity or resource, Edit

## **Standard course formats**

1. **Weekly format** - The course is organized week by week, with a clear start date and a finish date where courses are placed every week in the mentioned period. Moodle will create a section for each week of your course. You can add content, forums, quizzes, and so on in the section for each week.

TIP: If you want all your students to work on the same materials at the same time, this would be a good format to choose.

NOTE: Make sure your course start date is correct.

2. **Topics format** - The course is organised into topic sections that a teacher can give titles to. Each topic section consists of activities, resources and labels.

TIP: This is great to use if your course is objective-based and each objective may take different amounts of time to complete.

3. **Social format** - This format is oriented around one main forum, the social forum, which appears listed on the main page. It is useful for situations that are more free form. They may not even be courses.

4. **Single activity format** - The single activity format only has 1 section, and allows the teacher to add one activity only to the course. When the single activity format is selected, a dropdown menu appears for the teacher to choose the activity they wish to use.

TIP: This format is useful for courses which centre all their materials and classes on one main topic or activity; for classes which are based on a single workshop.

"All sections on one page / one section per page"

Moodle allows you to show all course material as one single page, or it can create a separate page for each week/topic. It is possible via Administration > Course administration > Edit settings to "show one section per page".

Notes:

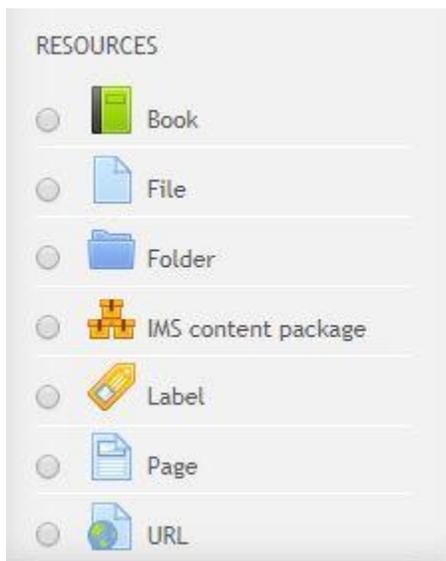
The course home page shows just the section names and any text in the section description along with activity and resource numbers, with the names being click-able.

Once you have selected a topic by clicking on its name, you then see one section at a time. If editing is ON, then the Main course page will display all the content in all the sections.

## 5. Course Resources

A Resource in Moodle is an item that a teacher can add to a Moodle course to support learning, such as a file, a video or link to a website. A resource differs from an activity in that it is static; i.e. the student can merely look at or read it, rather than participate. A teacher can add resources by turning on the editing and by clicking Add an activity or resource in a course section. Resources usually appear in the central area of the course.

[+ Add an activity or resource](#)



### Book

Multi-page resource with a book-like format, the book module allows you to have main chapters and sub-chapters. The book module is not interactive. You can, however, link to choices, forums and so on, or include multimedia content.

### File

When you wish to share with your students a simple file such as a Word-processed document or slide-show (e.g. created in MS Word, PowerPoint, or Open Office) you use the file resource type. How your students access these depends on your choices in File resource settings. Note also that they will only be able to open your files if they have the appropriate software on their personal computers. You can now drag & drop files directly from your computer to the core course page.

## Folder

For helping organize files. The resources may be of different types. Using a folder to display resources is neater and takes up less space than displaying files one by one in a list. The downside is that at present you are forced to download files stored in a folder resource.

## Page

The student sees a single, scrollable screen that a teacher creates with the robust HTML editor. A page resource creates a link to a screen that displays the content created by the teacher.

## Label

A label serves as a spacer on a Moodle course page. It can be used to add text, images, multimedia or code in between other resources in the different sections. It is a very versatile resource and can help to improve the appearance of a course. Banners or descriptions may be added to labels to distinguish between and highlight different areas.

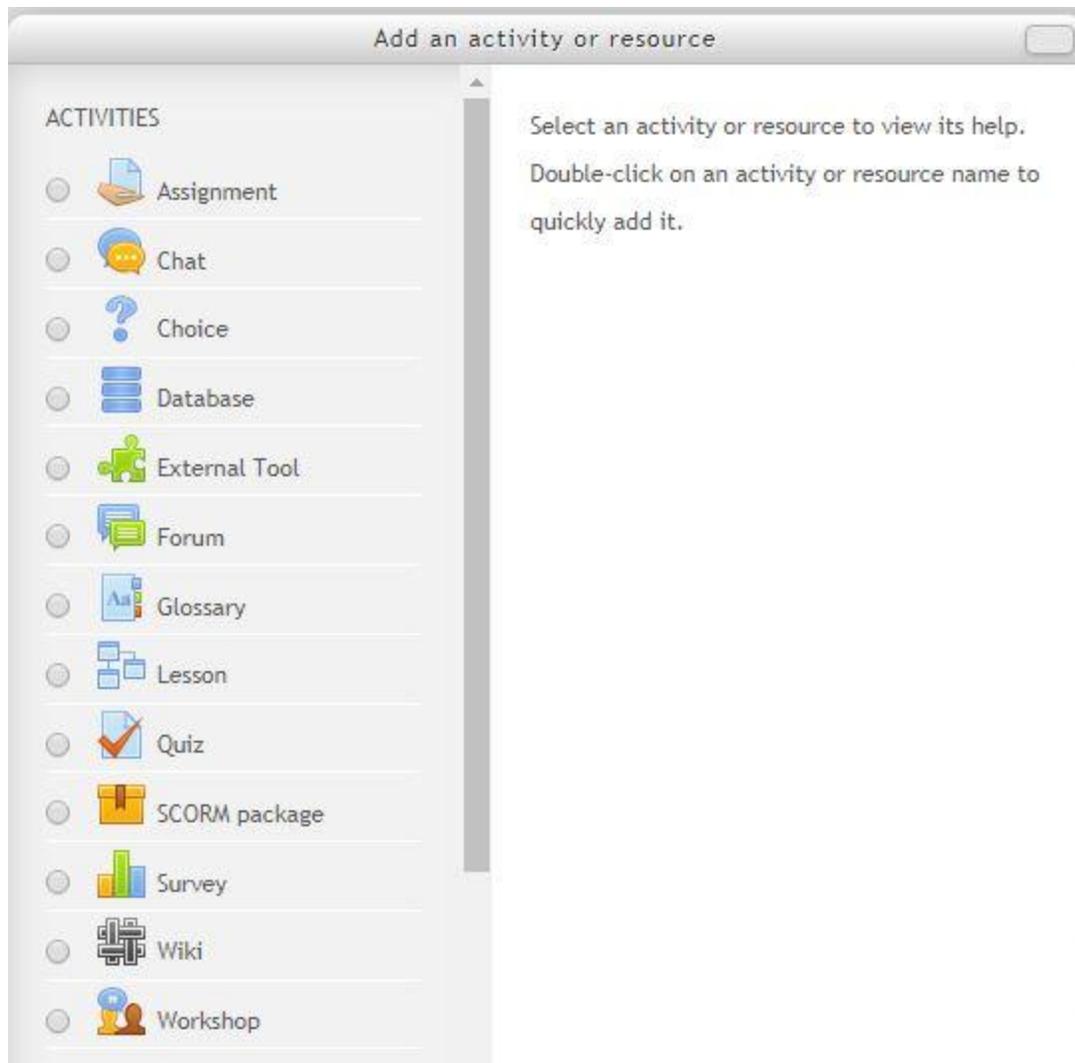
## URL

You can send the student to any place they can reach in their web browser.

## 6. Course Activity

An Activity in Moodle is a feature where students learn by interacting with each other or with their teacher. They might, for instance, contribute in a forum, upload an assignment, answer questions in a quiz or collaborate in a wiki. Activities can be graded. A teacher can add activities by turning on the editing and choosing an activity by clicking “Add an activity or resource” in a course section. Activities usually appear in the central area of the course.

 [Add an activity or resource](#)



## Assignments

Enable teachers to grade and give comments on uploaded files and assignments created on and offline. The work students submit, is visible only to the teacher and not to the other students unless a group assignment is selected. Very useful. *Note that deadlines set in the assignment's settings will appear automatically in the course calendar.*

## Chat

Allows participants to have a real-time synchronous discussion. Not useful: distracts students, does not keep logs.

## Choice

A teacher asks a question and specifies a choice of multiple responses.

## Database

Enables participants to create, maintain and search a bank of record entries. The format and structure of these entries can be almost unlimited, including images, files, URLs, numbers and text amongst other things.

## External tool

Allows participants to interact with LTI compliant learning resources and activities on other web sites.

## Forum

Allows participants to have asynchronous discussions. Very useful (more than you can think at first).

## Glossary

Enables participants to create and maintain a list of definitions, like a dictionary. Quite useful but does not offer the possibility to export the content in a well-formatted format.

## Lesson

An activity used for delivering content in flexible ways. Basically, a set of organised pages.

## Quiz

Allows the teacher to design and set quiz tests, which may be automatically marked and feedback and/or to correct answers shown. Very useful.

## SCORM

Enables SCORM packages to be included as course content. SCORM packages are interactive e-learning capsules created by specific software such as Articulate Storyline.

## Workshop

The workshop activity module enables the collection, review and peer assessment of students' work. Students can submit any digital content (files), such as word-processed documents or spreadsheets and can also type text directly into a field using the text editor.

Submissions are assessed using a multi-criteria assessment form defined by the teacher. The process of peer assessment and understanding the assessment form can be practised in advance with example submissions provided by the teacher, together with a reference assessment. Students are allowed to assess one or more of their peers' submissions. Submissions and reviewers may be anonymous if required.

## Survey

For gathering data from students to help teachers learn about their class and reflect on their own teaching. Not very useful: the questions are pre-defined and not modifiable.

## Wiki

A collection of web pages that anyone can add to or edit. Quite complex – I recommend to use this kind of activity only with students who are comfortable with computers.

The lecturer will not use all of these resources; however, the right combination can lead to a well-designed and balanced course. We now move on to the forum.

## 7. Forums

The forum module is an activity where students and teachers can exchange ideas by posting comments. The teacher or other students can grade forum posts.

This is a question and answer forum. In order to see other responses to these questions, you must first post your answer

**Combining the Games**  
by *Mary Cooch* - Thursday, 13 September 2012, 9:58 PM

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Do you think the Olympics and Paralympics should be combined? If yes, why, and if no, why not?

[Reply](#)

**Subject (hidden)**  
*Author (hidden)*

---

This post cannot be viewed by you, probably because you have not posted in the discussion or the maximum editing time hasn't passed yet.

A forum can contribute significantly to successful communication and community building in an online environment. You can use forums for many innovative purposes in educational settings, but teaching forums and student forums are arguably the two more significant distinctions.

You can access an existing forum by clicking the configure icon or clicking on the forum and then Administration > Forum administration > Edit settings.

The forum module is useful because you can customize it and adapt it to many activities such as general discussion, group activities, general information, FAQ... In addition, it is straightforward to use, even by students who are not very comfortable with computers.

## Forum type

There are five forum types to choose from:

- A single simple discussion - A single topic discussion developed on one page, which is useful for short, focused discussions (cannot be used with separate groups)
- Standard forum for general use - An open forum where anyone can start a new topic at any time; this is the best general-purpose forum. Each person posts one discussion - Each person can post exactly one new discussion topic (everyone can reply to them though)

- Q and A Forum - Instead of initiating discussions participants pose a question in the initial post of a discussion. Students may reply with an answer, but they will not see the replies of other Students to the question in that discussion until they have themselves replied to the same discussion.
- Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format

Note: News forum is a special type of forum that is automatically created with a new course. We usually use it as an Announcement Board or Notice Board as students cannot reply to posts that are added here by the lecturer or an administrator on the site.

## Subscription mode

When a user is subscribed to a forum it means that they will receive notification (via popup and/or email) of each new posting. By default, posts are recorded about 30 minutes after the post was first written.

People can usually choose whether or not they want to be subscribed to each forum. However, the teacher can choose to force subscription on a particular forum then all course users will be subscribed automatically, even those that enrol at a later time.

There are four (4) subscription mode options:

1. Optional subscription - Participants can choose whether to be subscribed
2. Forced subscription - Everyone is subscribed and cannot unsubscribe
3. Auto subscription - Everyone is subscribed initially but can choose to unsubscribe at any time.
4. Subscription disabled - Subscriptions are not allowed.

The subscription mode and subscribe or unsubscribe links appear in Navigation>Forum administration when viewing the forum.

## 8. The Grade-book

All the grades for each student in a course can be found in the course grade-book, or 'Grader report' in Administration > Course administration > Grades. Note that this is for your personal use, limited to your course (All official grades for students are centralised in CGST Registry Office in the Academic Deans Department. Students can only access their final grades through this Office).

## 9. Managing the Course

Apart from the daily monitoring of course activities and responding to student queries, lecturers may need to view reports, logs as well as do a weekly backup.

### Reports and Logs

#### ***Logs of course activity***

A log of activity in the course may be generated by a teacher in Administration > Course administration > Reports > Logs.

Note that the generated log will contain any action performed by the users, such as clicks on links or access to course pages, and is usually too detailed to be useful for teachers

### Participants list

Under the course name in the Navigation Block is a link called "Participants," which list the number of students in the course and shows their last time of access. This participants list is valuable information for the lecturer who can keep track of whether students have been absent from the course for days.

### Participation report

A participation report for a particular activity can be in Administration > Course administration > Reports > Course participation.

The definition of View and Post for the selected activity type will be given on screen. For example:

Forum View: View Discussion, Search, Forum, Forums, Subscribers

Forum Post: Add Discussion, Add Post, Delete Discussion, Delete Post, Move Discussion, Prune Post, Update Post

A useful feature of the participation report is the option to send a message to all students who have not completed a certain action. Other options with selected users are to add a note or extend enrolment.

### Reusing Data

There are many ways to reuse a course or part thereof.

### Backup/restore

It is possible to make a copy or backup of individual activities in a Moodle course and then re-use these activities in a different Moodle site or in another course on the same Moodle. (Note that if you wish to re-use activities within the same Moodle it might be simpler to use the import function.) To proceed, you need to be in the activity, and choose "Backup" in the administration menu. You can then restore it to a course in another Moodle site.

## Clone resource/activity

In edit mode use the “duplicate” icon to clone the activity or resource. This Clone resource/activity is very useful when you want to create several similar items. You will then change the content only and won't need to set all the parameters.

## Import course data

Course activities and resources may be imported from any other course for which the teacher has editing permissions. This Import course data will allow teachers to re-use instead of re-creating one or more activities or resources.

Import course data is similar to a backup and restore process and does not include any user data.

1. In Administration > Course Administration, click on the Import link.
2. Select the course you wish to import from and click Continue.
3. Select the elements you want to include in the import in the Schema settings step.
4. Review and click Perform import or click the cancel or previous buttons.

You should see the "Import complete. Click continue to return to the course." message, or an error message indicating that the import process did not take place.

## Conclusion

The information in this document, only forms a part of the overall capabilities of the Moodle platform, the LMS that supports the CGST Online Campus. With this document lecturers are introduced to some of the concepts, terminologies and activities that will be taught during the tutorial sessions which will be recorded and shared online.

## Resources

Boettcher, Judith V. 2013. “Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online: Quick Guide for New Online Faculty.” Designing for Learning. 2013. [www.designingforlearning.info](http://www.designingforlearning.info).

Smith, Kevin G. 2014. *Handbook for Assessors*. South Africa: South African Theological Seminary.