About this manual...

by PCC Distance Learning Office

This manual has been created by the Distance Learning Office at Pitt Community College to help faculty and students in learning new concepts in instructional technology.

Distance Learning Office:

Tina Farmer
Course Development Support Coordinator (faculty training)
tfarmer@email.pittcc.edu
(252) 493-7615

Kim Rouse
Administrative Assistant
krouse@email.pittcc.edu
(252) 493-7256

Mike Clendenen
Content Creation Specialist
mclendenen@email.pittcc.edu
(252) 493-7645
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1 Introduction

When writing this manual we assume that you have at least a basic knowledge of using a computer including input devices like a mouse and keyboard. In addition, it is assumed that you are familiar with your web browser and navigating between pages on the internet.

In this guide you will be introduced to the basics of using Moodle as part of your studies. The most appropriate use of this manual is to have it to hand while you use Moodle for the first time.

An online version of this guide is available on your Moodle Home page in case you wish to refer to it later in electronic format.

How to best use this guide is up to you. It has been written so that you can either work through it in a linear way or jump to any specific sections as you wish.

1.1 My.PittCC

My.PittCC is Pitt Community College's new portal. One advantage of this portal is that you have a single login and password that will give you access to email, Moodle and other online resources used by Pitt Community College. You must log into MyPittCC in order to access your email or your online courses.

1. Open your Internet browser. (we recommend the most recent version of Internet Explorer or Firefox)
2. Navigate to the PCC Portal page by typing my.pittcc.edu in the URL address bar, then pressing Enter on your keyboard.

You should now see the My Pitt CC Portal Page
Your User ID will consist of the following format: First initial, Middle initial, Last name, Last three (3) digits of your Student ID Number. Your Student ID number is the seven (7) digit number located on your schedule or Student ID Card.

Example: John Michael Doe 0098765 would have a userid of jmdoe765.

Your initial password will be your initials+7 digit Student ID Number, located on your schedule or Student ID Card. For example John Michael Doe, whose Student ID Number is 0098765 would have a password of jmd0098765.

3. Enter your User Name and Password in the Login box and click Log In.
You should be taken to your My Pitt CC home page, similar to the one below.

If you are unable to log into your My.PittCC portal click the Help & FAQ link at the top of the page.

1.2 **Emailing your Instructor**

It is a good idea for all Internet students to send an introductory email to each of their instructors within the first few days of the course.

1. Log into the your My.PittCC portal page. For help with this please see the My.PittCC chapter of this guide.
2. Click the Check Mail link as seen below.
You should be automatically taken to your e-mail account.

3. Click the Compose Mail link to create a new message.

4. Type your instructor's email address into the To: box. If you're not sure what their email address is, you can look your course up at http://research.pittcc.edu/schedules/index.cfm.

5. Type the course information into the Subject: box.

6. Type a brief message to your instructor in the large box.
7. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Send button.

Your email message has now been sent.

While you are in your email, you'll want to read any messages your instructor may have already sent you.

1.3 Creating & Saving Word Files

It is essential that you know how to use a word processing program to save your work. All of your work must be saved to a file before you can submit it to your instructor.

Your work must be done in either Microsoft Word or WordPad. Assignments done using Microsoft Works or WordPerfect cannot be opened by your instructor.

1. First click the Start button, then hold the mouse over Programs.
2. Select Microsoft Word on the Programs menu and click it to open.

If you do not see Microsoft Word on your start menu you can use WordPad to complete most assignments. WordPad is located under Accessories on the Start menu.

For this example, we are going to use MS Word.
3. Once Word is open, type in a descriptive header on your assignment.

It is very important to include a descriptive header in every file you send to your instructor. Always include:

- Your Name
- Class and Section #
- The name of the Assignment
4. Complete your assignment in MS Word or Word Pad.

Saving the file

5. Next you need to save the file. To do this you should click the File menu and then choose Save As. If you are using Word 2007/2010 you'll click on the big, round Office button, instead of the file menu.
6. Use the Save In list to choose where you want to save your file.
   - If you are working on your personal computer you'll probably want to save the work on your hard drive. You can save your work anywhere you like, but it's a good idea to create a special folder for your coursework. To create a new folder, click the new folder button. Choose a descriptive name for your folder. The name of the class is a good choice.
   - If you are using a public computer you'll want to save your work to a USB Drive. (You'll need to insert the drive first).

7. Name the word file.
   It is important to give your file a descriptive name. Unless your instructor specifies otherwise always include your name and the assignment name in your file name.
8. Once you name your file you can click the Save button.

Submitting the file

Instructors prefer that students submit work in different ways. Your instructor will let you know which way to submit your assignments.
Part II
2 Using Moodle at PCC

Moodle is one of many Learning Management Systems (LMS). Simply, a LMS is software that is designed to add to traditional learning methods in order to enhance the learning experience of their users. Moodle runs as an interactive website with a number of features and activities designed to engage learners and promote collaborative, student-centered learning.

2.1 Getting Started

Our experiences of Moodle tell us that it is a pretty intuitive tool to use. How easy you find it will depend on your own background. That said, a general rule of “have a go and see what happens” can be applied in most cases. On the Moodle Home page, you can find and link to this manual and other important information.

Part II of this document you will learn how to:

- Log into Moodle
- Editing your Profile
- Navigate around the site and your courses
- View your grades
- Use messages
- Use forums
- Submit assignments
- Take a quiz

2.2 Logging into Moodle

To log into Moodle you must first log into your My.PittCC portal page. For help with this please refer to the My.PittCC chapter of this guide. Once you log into the portal simply click the Moodle icon to be automatically logged into Moodle.
2.3 Navigating Moodle

One of the keys to becoming comfortable with Moodle 2 is remembering to look in the Settings block on the left for most of the options that used to appear at the top of the screen. Several changes relating to navigation are discussed below.

**My Home / Site Home**

In Moodle 2 you will now have the ability to select your desired “home page” for Moodle. The default is the Site Home page that you are used to seeing in Moodle 1.9. However, you may elect to change your default page to the My Home (aka My Moodle) page. To view the My Home page simply click the My Home heading from the Navigation block on the left. Note that the My Home page gives you easy access to your Private Files and is customizable. To change your home page, navigate to the page you wish to use. Look in the Settings block for “Make this my default home page”. If you do not see this option then the current page is already your default. If you do see this option simply click it to change your default home page.
Docking
Docking allows the user to collapse a block, thus opening up more of the screen for the course content.

Undocked

Docked
To dock a block, simply click the docking icon. But note that not all blocks can be docked. If the docking icon is not visible then that block cannot be docked. You will need to dock all the blocks on one side of the screen to receive any real benefit from docking.

The Docking icon, click once to dock...

...to undock, click the block title, then click the docking icon

Expandable/Collapsible Blocks
A very handy feature in Moodle 2 is the ability to expand and collapse content inside of some blocks. This allows the user a lot of freedom to easily navigate to exactly where they want to go, while not being overwhelmed by too much information.

Inside of a block, look for an arrow that points to the right, or down. This means that the content can be expanded or collapsed.

In the image below, note the squares beside Site Home and Site Pages – the squares indicate that these items are not expandable. Now look at the icon to the left of My profile. The right facing arrow indicates that this item is expandable, but has not yet been expanded. Compare it to the down pointing arrow to the left of My courses. This item has already been expanded, and its content is indented below the My courses heading.
It is important to realize that these arrows are toggle buttons. Click once and they expand, click again and they collapse. To save screen real estate keep the content you don’t need collapsed until you need it. This is especially important for the Navigation block because it can get so long that it moves the important information in your Settings block down out of view. The quick way is to simply click the arrow beside of My Courses. This will collapse all of the course links down and save a ton of space.

All items in the Navigation block have been collapsed to save space.

The Breadcrumb Trail
The breadcrumb trail shows the pages you have passed through to get to your current location. They are shown in the top left corner of the page and clicking on them will take you to that point in the course.
2.4 Accessing Your Course

After you log in, you should click on the course you want to enter in the My courses block. Be sure to click the name of the course and not the Instructor's name. Clicking the Instructor's name will take you to their profile and not into the course. You can also use the My Courses heading in the Navigation block on the left to access your courses.

Important Note: If you do not see any courses listed in your My Courses block, or if you see a list of all courses at PCC try again in 24 hours to give the system time to process.

You are now viewing the course homepage.
2.5 Editing your Profile

Now that you are logged on to Moodle we would advise that you Edit your profile. Editing your profile will allow you to become familiar with the options available to you in order to personalize your environment.

1. To edit your profile from your Home page, click on your name on the banner at the top of the page. 
   You will be taken to your profile page.

2. Select Edit Profile from the Settings block on the left of your screen.
   You will now see a page containing a series of options.

3. Below we will go through those options and give advice on selections. You may wish to consider changing the highlighted sections below.
Although, you may alter many of the settings most should be left as they are in order to ensure that Moodle functions for you at its best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Setting and explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>Your Email Address is set to your My.PittCC account automatically and can't be changed. This is done to ensure that third party email filters do not stop your communication from your course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email display</td>
<td>It is up to you which of these options you select but our advice is to keep in mind that the purpose of Moodle is collaboration and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email digest type</td>
<td>You should change this to <strong>Subjects</strong> to ensure that you receive your course email in a condensed format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum auto-subscribe</td>
<td>To keep your email inbox from filling up, you should set the Forum auto-subscribe field to <strong>No: don't automatically subscribe me to forums.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New picture</td>
<td>When inserting a picture it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate copyright clearance. To insert a picture click the browse button and search your computer for a picture. Make sure that the file is not larger than the maximum size listed. The image file will be cropped to a square and resized down to 100 x 100 pixels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. When you are finished editing your profile, click the Update Profile button at the bottom of the page to save your changes.
2.6 Enabling Pop-ups In Moodle

In order to take some tests, and to make full use of the Moodle Messaging system you should enable Pop-Ups for the PCC Moodle site. Most browsers will have an automatic pop-up blocker, and there may be additional ones built into add-ons like the Google or Yahoo toolbars. You may need to enable pop-ups in more than one place to ensure you receive your messages instantly. Instructions are given below for Internet Explorer version 7 & Firefox version 3. You may need to look around a bit to locate the Pop-up controls for other browsers or add-ins, though the process should be similar.

**Internet Explorer Version 7.x**

1. Hold down the Alt key on your keyboard then press and release the T key. Now release the Alt key.

   A *Tools Menu should appear.*

2. Locate and click on the Pop Up Blocker Settings option.

3. Type *courses.pittcc.edu* into the "Address of website to allow:" box.

4. Click the Add button.
5. Click the Close button

**Firefox Version 3.x**

1. Locate and click on the Tools menu. If you do not see the tools menu you can hold down the Alt key on your keyboard then press and release the T key, then release the Alt key.

   *A Tools Menu should appear.*

2. Click the word "Options" from the bottom of the tools menu.

3. Click the Content icon from the top of the options window.

4. Click the Exceptions button to the right of the Block Pop-Up Windows option.
5. Key courses.pittcc.edu into the “Address of web site:” box, then click the Allow button.

6. Click the Close button.

7. Click the OK button.

2.7 Using The Calendar

The Moodle calendar is a very useful feature. The calendar is customized for each student. When you are on the main Moodle page, the calendar will contain notices about all of your different classes. Then once you go into a particular class, you’ll only see information about that one course. The calendar will also list important dates at PCC such as Spring Break, Last Day to Officially Withdrawl, and the start and end dates for class. You should use the calendar to stay up to date with your assignments and tests.
2.8 Page Layout and Blocks

The Course page you see as a student has Blocks on both sides and the main content through the middle. The image below highlights some of the features. There are a number of blocks available for your instructor to include or leave out as they see appropriate. Blocks can also be customized (e.g. moved to a different location by your instructor). This means that your courses will all appear slightly different to each other but you should soon become familiar with each.
2.9 Tracking Your Progress

Your instructor has the option to enable Activity Completion in your course. If they have chosen to do so, this will help you keep track of which items you have completed in the course. In the image below, notice the check boxes to the right of the items in the course.

Note that the first check box, for the Syllabus, is grayed out. This is a type of item that Moodle will mark as complete for you. Once you look at the Syllabus Moodle will put a check in the box to let you know you've completed that item.

The remaining items in the image above are not grayed out. They can actually be checked just by clicking them. This gives you the ability to keep a checklist of your activities. Typically these check boxes are used only to help you track your progress. However, some instructors may choose to use them to help determine your participation in the course. As a general rule, if you see the check boxes, be sure to use them.

2.10 Viewing your Grades

In Moodle, students can view their grades at any time.

To view your grades:
1. Log into Moodle and enter your course.
2. Click on the Grades link in the Settings Block.
3. Your grades will be displayed.
Note that you may need to click the grade category headings to see grades for individual assignments.
This may vary from course to course.

2.11 Using Messages in Moodle

Messages in Moodle work like a cross between an instant messenger and an email tool. If the recipient of your message is currently in logged into Moodle, messages acts like an "instant messenger". This lets you communicate in real time. If your receiver is NOT currently logged into Moodle, the message is sent as an email.

To send a message you should:

1. Log into Moodle and enter your course.
2. Click on Participants in the Navigation Block.

3. Click the name of the person you wish to receive the message.
That receiver’s profile will display.

4. On the profile page, click the Send Message link.

The message window will display.

6. On the Message Window, type your message to the receiver in the space provided and click the Send Message button.

Remember: If your receiver is currently in Moodle, Messages acts like an "Instant Messenger". If your receiver is NOT currently in Moodle, the message is sent as an email.
To receive a message in Moodle you should:

If you are not logged into Moodle, you will receive an email with the message attached. You can reply to the sender in your email if you like or you can log into Moodle and reply from the Messages Block.

To reply from the messages block you should:
1. Log into Moodle.
2. Locate the Messages block on the right hand side of your screen. Note that all unread messages will stay in this block until you have viewed them in Moodle. To keep this list short, view your messages frequently.
3. Click on the senders name to view the message.

The number to the left of the envelope indicates the number of messages send to you from this person.

4. Finally, you can reply to the message as you would normally.

2.12 Using Forums

Discussion boards in Moodle are called Forums. You can use forums to discuss topics selected by your instructor. When posting to a forum always assume that all other students in the class can view your posts. Forums can be customized to varying degrees by your instructor. The example used here is for a simple forum. You may experience several different types of forums in your classes.

Posting to a Forum:

To reply to a forum you should:
1. Log into Moodle and enter any course in which you are enrolled.
2. Click on forum you wish to review.
3. Read the directions and/or topic of the discussion.
4. Click on the Add a new discussion topic button.
5. On the add a new discussion topic page, type a subject for your topic in the subject line.

6. Next, type a reply to the forum in the Message field.

7. Lastly, click the Post to Forum button.

8. Once you have submitted your post you will see a page reminding you that you have time to edit the post before it is emailed to others if they have requested to have it do so.

9. Click the Continue link

To Edit a post:
10. To edit your post, click on your post link in the Discussion column.

11. Next, click the Edit link next to the post you wish to edit.

You can also change the way the replies are viewed by using the drop-down list.

**To Reply to a post:**

12. To Reply to a post, click on the post link in the Discussion column.

13. Next, click the Reply link at the bottom of the post.
14. Type your message into the box and click the Post To Forum button.

2.13 Submitting Assignments

You may be able to access your course assignments in the following ways:

On the main course page...

From the assignments page in the Activities Block...

Or possibly from the calendar...
There are three different types of assignments you can submit in Moodle.

**Submitting an Online Text Assignment:**

To submit an online text assignment you should:

1. Click on the assignment link from one of these locations: main course page, the assignments page or the calendar block.
2. Read the directions given by your instructor.
3. Click the **Edit my submission** button.
4. In the Submission text box, type the text requested by the directions.
5. Lastly, click the **Save Changes** button at the bottom of the Submission page.

**Submitting a file in an Assignment:**

To submit a file in an assignment you should:

1. Click on the assignment link from one of these locations: main course page, the assignments page or the calendar block.
2. Read the directions given by your instructor.
3. Click ‘Upload File’ (or ‘Edit Files’, if there are some already there)
4. Click ‘Add...’
5. Click 'Upload a File' (this step is not always needed)
6. Click 'browse'

7. Choose the file from your local drive + click 'open'
8. Click 'upload'
9. Repeat steps 4-8 for any further files
10. Click 'Save changes'

11. If necessary, you can use the gear icon to the right of your file to delete it.
Viewing Offline Assignments:

An offline assignment looks similar to the other types but you will not need to submit a file or type text into Moodle. An Offline assignment is just a set of directions given by your instructor for you to complete outside of Moodle.

To view an offline assignment you should:
1. Click on the assignment link from one of these locations: main course page, the assignments page or the calendar block.
2. Read the directions given by your instructor.
3. Complete the assignment as given.

2.14 Testing in Moodle

Testing Tips:

Testing in Moodle is very user friendly and most students like it. Moodle tests are computer graded which allow the student to receive their grade immediately in most cases. However, there are a few very important things you need to know before taking your first test in Moodle.

- When your instructor is ready for you to take a test typically a link will appear. Be sure you've read any information provided by your instructor as to when you should take the test. Never enter a test unless you are prepared to complete it.
- It is important to plan the time you'll take your test. Once you start a test there is no “turning back”. You should take your test at a time when you'll have few distractions.
- When you click on the link to a test you'll be taken to an overview screen where you can learn a little
about the quiz. Included will most likely be the due or close date for the quiz and the time limit if applicable.

- Occasionally your instructor may password a test. If you are asked for a password when trying to enter a test you'll need to obtain the password from the instructor. Be very careful of capitalization when keying passwords.

- When you are ready to attempt the quiz click the Attempt Quiz Now button.

![Icebreaker Quiz](image)

Your test may be timed. If so, you'll see a timer appear at the top left of the screen when you enter your test. This timer will count down the time you have left to complete your test. In Moodle you will be kicked out when the time limit is up so please be sure to finish your test and submit it PRIOR to the time running out.

![Time Remaining](image)

- The student interface for quizzes has undergone a lot of improvement in this version of Moodle. It is now easy for students to keep up with where they are on the quiz and to flag questions they want to come back to. Take note of the new Quiz Navigation block at the top, left side of the screen when in the Quiz. Each number represents a question. The question with the dark border is the one you are currently working with. To move to a new question simply click the number, or click the next box.

![Quiz navigation](image)

- Also notice that for each question you can choose to “Flag Question”. This allows a student to mark a question so that they remember to come back to it later.

- The Quiz navigation block will tell you a lot of information about your status in a quiz. When a question has been flagged, its corresponding number in the Quiz navigation block will now have the upper, right
corner colored in red. As you move through a quiz, questions will be shaded gray as they’re answered. Notice in the image below that questions 2 and 5 have been flagged. Questions 3 and 4 have been answered and the user is currently on question 6.

- When the student is done with the quiz, they will click the Finish attempt link to be taken to a summary page prior to submitting the quiz for grading.

- The Summary page clearly shows the student which questions were flagged and which questions have been answered. From this screen they can click any question to return to it. When they’re completely finished with the quiz they will click the Submit all and finish button to submit the quiz for grading.

- Most of your test questions are graded as soon as you click Submit. Your instructor decides how much information you’ll see next. You may only see your score or you may see each question and the correct answer. For each question, note how many points you were awarded.

- Your score will appear in the gray box at the top of the page.

- You may miss a fill in the blank question due to spelling. If so, contact your instructor. They may or may not give you credit for the question.

- If your test includes essay or short answer questions those must be graded individually by your instructor. You are not awarded any points for those questions until the instructor has graded them.
• To come back later and review your tests, simply click on the name of the test from your course page, then click your grade.
Back Cover