

How to backup and restore Moodle courses from one term to another

Information Technology

Why backup up and restore?

When the IT department sets up a new term on the Moodle server, all courses in Banner that are assigned an instructor are automatically created in Moodle. The courses are 'shells'—there is no content in them (and by default, they are hidden so that students can't see them). If you want to use the content from a course you previously developed, you can back up that course and restore its content to the shell course. That's what these instructions are for.

Note that these instructions apply only to courses built in Moodle 1.9 or later, which includes any courses built after Summer 2007. To backup and restore courses from earlier terms, please contact the Academic Technology Center (ATC) at atc@lanecc.edu.

Important: the backup/restore process is very server-intensive: it requires a lot of memory and CPU resources, which can cause problems when server load is already high. Please complete these processes during low use periods (very late night or early morning), and if at all possible, avoid doing them at all during busy weeks of the term (fourth week, fifth week, and finals week).

Backing up a course

1. Log in to Moodle and click on the course you want to back up. Let's say we're backing up HST 414 (CRN 23098) from Fall 2007, with the goal of restoring it to Winter 2008 (CRN 31023); then, we'd click the "HST 414: Intellectual History Seminar Walton 23098)" link on the left:



2. Open Files>Backup Data
Delete all the old Backup files first.
3. Click the "Backup" link ( Backup) in the course's Administration block.

- Near the top of the Course backup page, click the "All" link (circled below) in the right-hand column. All the 'User Data' boxes in that column should now be selected.



(This part of the backup procedure is different from how we've done it in the past. We used to never include user data in the backup at all; due to changes in Moodle, it's necessary to include it now to ensure that the course will be copied properly.)

- Now scroll to the bottom of the page, where you'll see a list of menus like the ones in the figure below (the Metacourse menu may not be visible; don't worry if it's not). Make sure that the circled menus are set exactly as they appear below:



(This step of the process is also different. In the past, "Users" was always set to "None"; now, it should be set to "Course," and Grade histories must set to "Yes.")

- Click the "Continue" button at the bottom of the page.
- The next page will summarize what is being included in the backup. Scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click the "Continue" button to start the backup.
- You'll see messages as the backup proceeds ("Creating temporary structures," "Creating XML file," and so forth). Note that some course backups can take a long time, but the vast majority should require no longer than ten minutes.
- When the backup is done, you should see the message "Backup completed successfully."

Note: If you don't see this message, you should contact the Academic Technology Center (atc@lanecc.edu) to find out why the backup failed. Include as much information as you can about the problem (the CRN of the course you were backing up, and if possible the last status message that you saw as the backup was running).

- Click the “Continue” button after the “Backup completed successfully” message. You’ll then be shown a list of your course backup files, including the one you just finished:

Name	Size	Modified	Action
Parent folder			
backup-hst_414_walton_23098_-20071204-1308.zip	6KB	4 Dec 2007, 01:40 PM	Unzip List Restore Rename
restorelog.html	1.3KB	4 Dec 2007, 01:41 PM	Edit Rename

Course backup file: click the name to download to your desktop

- At this point, your course backup is complete. To copy the course you just backed up to a different term, you’ll need to download the backup file to your desktop, and then upload it to where you want to copy it. To do that, right click on the name of the file (circled above), or control click if you are using a Macintosh with only a single mouse button, and specify where you want to save the file. You may need to configure your browser to save the file correctly. The resulting file should end in .zip (e.g., “backup-hst_414_walton_23098_-20071204-1308.zip”).

Restoring a course backup to a new term

- Log in to Moodle and go to the course you want to restore the backup TO (the target of the restore) by clicking on the link under “My Courses.” In this example, we will be copying our HST 414 course from Fall 2007 (CRN 23098) to Winter 2008 (CRN 31023), so we would click the “HST 414: Intellectual History Seminar” link on the left.
- Once you’re in the target course, click the “Restore” ( Restore) link in your Administration block.
- Now you must upload the backup file for the course you want to restore. (This assumes you’ve already downloaded a copy of the course backup file—if you haven’t go to step 11 of the backup process, above.) Click the “Upload a file” button, which will take you to the Upload page and click the “Browse...” button to select the file you want to upload from your computer. Then, click the “Upload this file” button:

Upload a file (Max size: 500MB) --> /backupdata

backup-hst_414_walton_23098_-20071204-1308.zip

Note: if the course backup file is larger than the maximum upload size (500 MB in the example above), you will run into problems uploading the backup file: you may get an error message, or the process may time out, or it may simply fail silently with a blank page. If this happens, please contact the Academic Technology Center at atc@lanec.edu to upload the file for you.

- Once the file finishes uploading, you should see it listed in the window, with a set of links (Unzip, List, Restore, Rename) to the right. To restore this course, click the "Restore" link (circled below):

Name	Size	Modified	Action
Parent folder			
backup-hst_414_walton_23098_-20071204-1308.zip	7.6KB	4 Dec 2007, 01:25 PM	Unzip List Restore Rename

- In the next window, you'll be asked if you want to start the restore process. Click "Yes" where it asks if you want to continue.
- The next screen is just a status page that will show you information about the course backup file. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Continue."
- On the top of the next screen (Course restore), change the "Restore to" setting to "Existing course, deleting it first." (In some cases, the phrase "Existing course" will be replaced by "Current course"; they mean the same thing.) The key is to *not* select "Existing course, adding data to it"—you will always want to delete the existing data first.

Restore to Existing course, deleting it first

- Near the top of the page (just underneath the first set of menus), click the "None" link on the right-hand side, in the "User Data" column. This will uncheck all of User Data checkboxes. This step is very important—you do not want to import user data from your previous term's course into the new course!

Include	All/None
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forums	<input type="checkbox"/> All/None
	<input type="checkbox"/> User Data

- At the bottom of the page, you'll see a set of menu options similar to what you saw in step 4 of the backup process. Make sure that the circled menus are set exactly as they appear below:

Metacourse No
 Users None
 Groups Yes
 Logs No
 User Files No
 Course files Yes
 Site files Yes
 Grade histories Yes

- Scroll to the bottom of the Course restore window, and click Continue.

11. On the next screen click "Restore this course now." You'll get a series of status messages as the restore progresses ("Creating groups," "Copying course files," "Creating course modules," and so forth). During some parts of the process, Moodle will draw a series of dots to indicate that a time-consuming operation is in progress.
12. Once the restore completes, you should see the message "Restore completed successfully." At this point, you can click the "Continue" button, and you are ready to begin editing your course.

If you don't see the "completed successfully" message, then either the course restore hasn't finished (it can take up to ten minutes), or a problem occurred. If the message doesn't appear after 30 minutes, you should contact the Academic Technology Center for assistance at atc@lanecc.edu.

Note that you can restore a regular course to a metacourse and vice-versa. Only the course content is backed up, and not the course settings, so it doesn't matter what kind of courses you're working with when you restore from a backup.

Need help?

If you need assistance with any part of the backup and restore process, please email the Academic Technology Center (ATC) at atc@lanecc.edu. The ATC's website also offers self-help with Moodle, and is available at <http://www.lanecc.edu/atc>.