

Building an online community based on learning and achievement

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We live in a world where it is increasingly important to be able to demonstrate your knowledge and share your achievements within your personal and professional networks. It is productive and useful for you to be able to let people know the kinds of skills and competencies you possess. Further, gaining more competencies is motivating when you are in a gamified environment.

Creating a certificate course

Making training and professional development available for a group or community of like-minded users will allow individuals to earn credentials in topics that are in demand. They can also take the courses that have a reputation for high quality, relevant content, and reliable assessment.

The following is a checklist of configurations, settings, and items to include in your certificate course:

- Select the Essential theme because it allows you to directly input social networking URLs in the spaces provided on the Theme Settings screen. Please note that the Essential theme is a contributed theme and if it is not already installed, your Moodle administrator will need to download and install it.
- Create resources such as Book for course content, clear presentations/videos, and training material.
- Create your assessment in the form of a self-scored Quiz activity.
- On the Course default settings screen, enable completion tracking. Make sure that this option has been enabled in the Advanced features submenu of the Site administration menu.
- Clicking on the Add an activity or resource link, add Certificate. Configure the certificate's Activity completion section so that it shows activity as complete when conditions (certain grade or conditions) are met. Completing the course triggers the generation of a certificate.
- Design certificates that are unique, attractive, descriptive, and that help build your brand. Include your logo and a custom watermark.
- Display the full series of certificates that are available in order to motivate users to earn all of them.

Creating badge-generating courses

Earning badges upon completion of a level or a course and then displaying them in a cloud-based location as well as on Facebook or other social media sites is just one popular example of the "gamification" of training. "Gamifying" training helps one motivate learners because, as in the case of video games, one can display their competency as they ascend to different "levels". Follow the same steps covered in the previous section to create a certificate-generating course. Then continue with the following steps:

1. In the Site administration menu, click on Badges.
2. Click on Manage badges and then click on the Add a new badge button.
3. After creating a badge, configure the badge's Criteria tab so that it generates a badge upon completion of the course.
4. Design badges that are unique, attractive, descriptive, and that help build your brand.
5. Display the full series of badges that are available in order to motivate users to earn all of them. One good place to do so is in News forum, where you can upload a graphic to an icon or a link to a website that includes information about the badge and a graphic for each icon.
6. To give your badge publicity and share it, you may wish to register the ones you offer at the Open Badges project at <http://openbadges.org/>.

Note:

You can learn more about the Mozilla OpenBadges project and the Mozilla OpenBadges Backpack at

<http://openbadges.org/>. As you develop your social media publicity strategy, you may wish to feature the testimonials of individuals who have completed courses and display their faces next to their badges. You'll need to obtain permission to use their quotes and images, but it's painless and completely worth the effort. To do so, follow the given procedure:

1. Go to the Site administration menu.
 2. Click on Plugins and Authentication.
 3. To set permissions and access levels, fill in the fields for Site policies by navigating to Site administration | Security. Keep in mind that any information you share via a social networking site could be shared or made public.
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