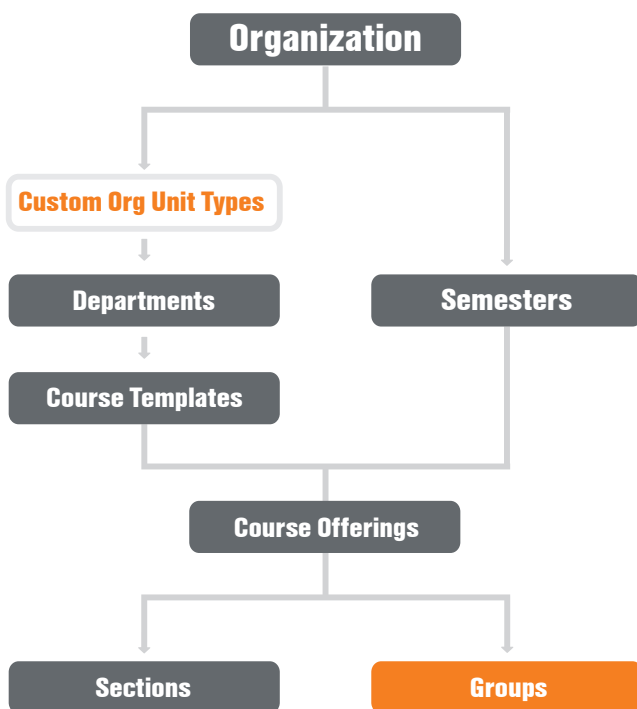# Groups Guide

What are Groups?

Groups are individual org units that exist below **Course Offerings** in the Org Structure. They are comprised of students enrolled in a particular course offering.

Groups are more than an organizational element of the Learning Environment. They also have cross-functionality with multiple tools within the system. In this document you will find instructions and information on how Groups interact with Discussions, Dropbox and Locker.

Groups can be utilized for any group assignment/activity that requires learners to interact, submit, or share materials through the Learning Environment.

```
                    Organization
                         │
          ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
          │                             │
   Custom Org Unit Types                │
          │                             │
      Departments                   Semesters
          │
   Course Templates
          │
          └──────────────┬
                 Course Offerings
                         │
          ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
      Sections                      Groups
```

How to Create Groups

Groups can be created before all users have been added to a course, but it is considered a best practice to wait until all users are enrolled. This prevents manual user additions to groups later on.

Note: If your Edit Course menu is organized by category, Groups can be found under the Learner Management heading.

Go to **Edit Course** and select the **Groups** tool. Create a new category for this set of groups. As a best practice, the category is generally the assignment/activity the groups relate to; for example, "**Romeo and Juliet Presentations**" or "**Ethics Discussions Groups**". Choose the Enrolment Type based on the following criteria:

- Will the Group enrolment be based on the number of people per group, the number of groups in the class, or both?
- Will you allow students to self-enroll in a Group?
- Will you manually assign students to Groups?

Depending on the enrolment type, you will be asked for the number of students per group or the number of Groups you wish for the class. Select via checkbox which tools you wish to auto–set up for the groups: Discussions, Lockers and/or Dropboxes.

Groups vs. Sections

Sections and Groups exist on the same org level, but do not share the same functionality. Sections are purely an organizational org unit that allows for multiple students in the same course to be organized by lecture date, tutorial time, etcetera. Groups have cross–functionality with some tools that Sections do not (Discussions, Dropbox and Locker).

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Groups and Discussions

Discussion Forums can be restricted to specific Groups. Possible use cases include private forums to discuss group work, gradable group discussion/ debate, etcetera.

Discussions can be created during the Group creation process or after. All Forum/Topic setup, Availability and Restriction options will still be valid and available (see Discussions guide for further info).

If the Discussion is automatically created from the Groups tool, it will auto format the Discussion to have a Forum under the Group Category name, with an individual Topic for each Group under the group name. Those Topics will automatically be restricted to the members of those Groups.

Existing Forums and Topics can be restricted to Groups manually by finding them within the Discussions tool and selecting **Edit** from the drop-down menu.

- Enter the Restrictions tab and click **Create and Attach** under the Release Conditions header.
- From the drop-down menu, find the **Classlist** header and select **Group Enrolment**.
- Select the appropriate group from the drop-down menu that appears.

This process can also be used if new Topics and Forums are to be assigned to particular Groups.

Note: Forums/Topics can only be automatically created when a new Group Category is created. Adding/assigning Discussion to existing Groups always requires manual creation of Release Conditions within the Discussions tool.

Groups and Dropboxes

Dropboxes automatically created in Groups Setup are configured for group submissions. This means that any member of the Group can submit the assignment on behalf of the Group. Any assessments within the Dropbox will be given to each Group member.

Groups must be in place before a Group Dropbox can be created. Individual Dropboxes can be assigned to specific Groups using Release Condition as described above; however, once a Dropbox is created it cannot be changed from Individual to Group submission or vice-versa.

See the Dropbox resource for further information on customizing Dropboxes.

Groups and Lockers

Lockers are simply a place for users to store files. Group Lockers provide a space restricted to members of a Group for users to upload and download files relevant to their group work.

Each user has a personal Locker as soon as they are created, and this is managed at the org level. Group Lockers are created at the course level because of Groups' place in the org structure. They can only be created during the Group Category setup process. No management is required after setup because of their basic nature.