

Groups

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This is a guide compiled by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) to help UCT teaching staff with the use of the Groups tool on the new digital learning platform, Amathuba.

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What is the Groups tool?

Groups is a tool used for organising students within a course offering into a smaller unit. Groups are individual organisational units that exist below course offerings in the org structure. Groups also have cross-functionality with multiple tools within the system.

This document contains information on how Groups interacts and relates with tools like Discussions and Assignments, Announcements, and group communication channels.

Why use the Groups tool?

The Groups tool can be used for:

1. Group assignments or activity that requires students to interact, submit or share materials within Amathuba.
2. Creating smaller or differentiated learning cohorts within a course offering.

Creating and editing groups

While groups can be created before all students have been added to a course, it is recommended to wait until all students are enrolled to prevent manual student additions.

Categories:

In the Groups tool, it is recommended to create a **New Category** for each set of groups to be created. Examples of categories include: *Research Presentations, Ethics Discussions, Tutorials, Labs, Practicals, Field Trips, Oral Exams, etc.*

Note: Groups have a maximum enrolment of 200 users. If there are more than 200 users in a course, you will need to create new group categories as these are not limited in a course.

Setting up Groups:

- Step 1:** From the default **Manage Groups** page, select **New Category**.
- Step 2:** Input a **Category Name** (i.e. a group type) and add a **Description** (optional).
- Step 3:** Select an **Enrolment Type** from the drop-down list. 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?

Enrolment Type

of Groups - No Auto Enrolments ▾

of Groups - No Auto Enrolments

Groups of #

of Groups

Groups of # - Self Enrolment

of Groups - Self Enrolment

of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrolment

Single user, member-specific groups

Restrict Enrollments To *

No restrictions ▾

- Will you allow students to self-enrol into groups or will you manually assign students to groups?

Depending on the enrolment type, you will be required to indicate the number of groups you need to create for the class, the number of students per group, or both.

Enrolment Type Descriptions:

To conceptualise which group categories to create, you will need to understand the options available:

Enrolment Type	Description	Use Case Suggestion
# of Groups – No Auto Enrolments	<p>Select this enrolment type for a specified number of groups, where any number of students will be <u>manually added by staff</u> using the Enrol User functionality. More groups can be added as needed (retrospectively) as new students register.</p> <p>Preferably used when you know how many groups you need and which students you want in each group.</p>	<p>For teaching models that divide the student cohort into specific learning levels, or division by skill, interest or to ensure parity or diversity.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Interview Groups, Role Play Groups, Presentation Groups, etc.</i></p>
Groups of #	<p>Creates the minimum number of groups required for students to be in a specified maximum group size. More groups can be added if needed (retrospectively) as new students register. Once created, in the Members column of that group, capacity displays in the form of x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity.</p> <p>Preferably used when the number of students per group is known.</p> <p>Note: If the Classlist tool in the course is not populated with students before setting up the group enrolment type, the minimum number of groups needed to create groups within your specified size are created with no students enrolled in them, i.e. the tool will only create 1 group (as it will be pulling from an empty class list). Groups can be added later and will</p>	<p>For assignments that require division of workload between a specific number of students, or to accommodate a set number of users in a lab or workspace or learning event scenario at a time.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Science Lab Groups, Computer Lab Groups, Field Trip Groups, etc.</i></p>

	<p>allow for enrolling students using the Enrol Users page. However, we recommend waiting until your Classlist tool is populated with registered students first before you set up this enrolment type.</p> <p>Advanced Properties > Groups Options: If selecting the Auto-Enrol New Users checkbox option (i.e. enabling it), and the existing groups reach their capacity limit, additional/new students are automatically added to a new group. When the number of enrolled students is not static, all new users are added to the same group until it reaches capacity. This is known as the <i>bucket-filling algorithm</i>; the limits of one group must be met before another group is created.</p>	
# of Groups	<p>Select this enrolment type for a specified number of groups, where students can be <u>manually added by staff</u> using the Enrol User functionality or it is preferred that Amathuba place students in each group. More groups can be added as needed (retrospectively) as new students register.</p> <p>Advanced Properties > Groups Options: If you select/enable the Auto-Enrol New Users checkbox option for this group enrolment type, whether or not groups are set up before or after the Classlist tool is populated with students, newly enrolled students will be automatically added to the group with the fewest students in it. This is known as the <i>brick-laying algorithm</i>.</p> <p>Note: Amathuba's default is that students cannot self-enrol into more than one group.</p>	<p>For the creation of random membership or to accommodate factors such as tutor/ teaching assistant availability, resource, or space limitations, which restrict group numbers.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Studio Work Groups, Computer Lab Session Groups, etc.</i></p>
Groups of # – Self Enrolment	<p>Select this enrolment type to automatically create the minimum number of groups required for students to be in a specified maximum group size. Students select one group to join. More groups can be added as needed/as new students register. Once created, in</p>	<p>For courses that require the student cohort to choose groups based on their academic schedules or for courses that need to manage topic/themed</p>

	<p>the Members column of that group, capacity displays in the form of x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity.</p> <p>Preferably used when the number of students required per group needed is set and the choice of group enrolment is based on student preference/requirements/schedules.</p> <p>Note: The default in Amathuba is that students cannot self-enrol in more than one group. Furthermore, if the Classlist tool in the course is not populated with students before setting up this group enrolment type, the tool will only create 1 group (as it will be pulling from an empty Classlist). Groups can be added later using the Edit Category page; additional groups can also be created to ensure that students have more options. However, waiting until your Classlist tool is populated with registered students first before you set up this enrolment type is another option.</p>	<p>groups where students base their selection of the group on their area of interest or responsibility.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Research Groups, Tutorial Groups, Seminar Groups, etc.</i></p>
<p># of Groups – Self Enrolment</p>	<p>Select this enrolment type to create a specific number of groups but allows students to join only one. More groups can be added as needed/as new students register. Once created, in the Members column of that group, capacity displays in the form of x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity.</p> <p>Preferably used when the number of groups needed is set and the choice of group enrolment is based on student preference/requirements/availability.</p> <p>Note: The default in Amathuba is that students cannot self-enrol in more than one group.</p>	<p>For courses that require the student cohort to choose groups based on their academic schedules or for courses that need to manage topic/themed groups where students base their selection of the group on their area of interest or responsibility.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Tutorial Groups, Language Lab Session Groups, etc.</i></p>
<p># of Groups, Capacity of # – Self Enrolment</p>	<p>Select this enrolment type to create a specified number of groups, with each one accommodating a specified number of students, and allowing students</p>	<p>For courses that require the student cohort to choose groups based on their academic</p>

	<p>to select one group to join. More groups can be created as needed (retrospectively) as new students register. Once created, in the Members column of that group, capacity displays in the form of x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity. Group capacity can be increased or decreased after they have been created but only before the specified sign-up period ends. However, these size adjustments will apply to all groups in the category.</p> <p>Preferably used when a set number of groups is required, with a set number of students in each group, and each group is required to have a maximum number of students. Students can still join groups based on their preference/requirements/availability, but membership in each group is limited to the specified maximum number of students.</p> <p>Note: Amathuba's default is that students cannot self-enrol into more than one group.</p>	<p>schedules, areas of interest or responsibility.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Seminar Groups, Mock Trial Groups, etc.</i></p>
<p>Single user, member-specific groups</p>	<p>Select this enrolment type to create one group for each student at the time of enrolment in the course. More groups are automatically added as new students register. Once created, the group name is the student's first name and surname.</p>	<p>For course work that requires communication, or for private submissions only between lecturer/staff and the student.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Portfolio – First name Surname, Journal Entries – First name Surname, etc.</i></p>

Note on Manual Enrolment Types (the first three types mentioned above):

Please note, it is advised to use a separate tracking system to track which students have already been added to a group. Manually adding students increases the risk of placing a student in more than one group within a **Category** (e.g. a student being a **Member** of 2 x Tutorial Groups and making submissions to or attending these interchangeably). It is possible to check student membership after group creation and student allocations, but this can take time.

Step 4: Restrict Enrollments To*

- In the **Groups** tool, teaching staff can create sub-groups based on group enrolment to restrict enrolments to certain groups. However, only one enrolment restriction may be applied to a sub-group.
- To use this option, start in the Groups tool > **Manage Groups** > select **New Category** and input the relevant category information.
- Under the heading **Restrict Enrollments To***, select the relevant group. The **Group Prefix** field (detailed below) auto-fills based on the selected group. A lecturer could also edit this before hitting **Save**.
- **Note:** Sub-groups can only be added once; sub-groups of sub-groups cannot be created.
- Click **Save**.

Step 5: Include a Group Prefix:

When creating groups, there is a **Group Prefix** field. The name provided in this field will be given to each group in this **Category**, allowing for easier searching (e.g. Tut Group). If a prefix is not stated, the default prefix will be 'Group'.

Within the Groups tool, a checkbox can be selected to allow for the automatic setup of the **Discussions** or the **Assignments** tools specific to the groups. (We expand more on this on the 'Discussions' and/or 'Assignments' sections below.)

Step 6: Advanced Properties:

- **Randomise users in Groups:** Select this option (limited to specific enrolment types selected) to have students into groups randomly. If this option is not selected, students are enrolled alphabetically based on their order in the class list.
- **Make category and group descriptions visible to group members:** If a description has been provided when setting up groups, selecting this option will make that **Description** information visible to students within their groups.
- **Self-Enrolment Start Date/Expiry Date:** Once the self-enrol option is selected, **Groups Options** gives you the option to set date restrictions and to **Allocate unenrolled users:**
 - **Set Self-Enrollment Start Date:** Students can see the created groups but cannot self-enrol before the stated date. Teaching teams can manually enrol students at any time. Not choosing a date means the group is available for enrolment at any time after creation.
 - **Set Self-Enrollment Expiry Date:** Students will be able to join and leave groups until the expiry date. Not choosing a date means the group is available for enrolment at any time after creation.
 - **Allocate unenrolled users after Self-Enrollment Expiry Date:** All students not in a group at the time of the expiry date will automatically and randomly be placed in a group, and no

students will be able to leave or change groups themselves. Capacity can be ignored by the teaching team, who will always retain the ability to manage students in Groups.

Step 7: Additional Options > Create Workspace:

The options to **Set up discussion areas** and **Set up assignments** cannot be done retrospectively; if the requirement/preference is to have 'Assignments' or 'Discussions' (optional) associated with groups, the association needs to be made by setting it up at this stage.

Note: The creation of unassociated (from Groups) Discussions and Assignments can still be done directly in the respective tools (further details follow in the relevant sections below).

Editing Groups

Note: The number of students is the same across all groups within a Category. Student capacity numbers cannot be altered (increased/decreased) once Category groups are created; be sure to consider all group context needs first and to account for the possibility of an increase in student cohort. A **Groups Category** will need to be recreated if the group capacity changes.

Editing a Group Name

Navigate to the **Groups** tool > select the group that you want to edit by clicking on the name of that group > edit the group name > select **Save** at the bottom of the page.

Deleting Groups

If a group is deleted, please note:

- Where **Auto-enrol New Users** has been selected in the **Advanced Properties**, students will automatically be assigned to any remaining groups within that category.
- Where groups are using a manual **Enrolment Type** (i.e. **# of Groups - No Auto Enrolments, Groups of #, and # of Groups**), students must be added to the remaining groups using the **Enrol Users** functionality (i.e. click the group name > select **Enrol Users**).
- Deleting a **Category** results in students not being enrolled in groups.
- While **Group Discussion Forums** remain available for reference, these can be deleted directly from the **Discussions** tool (this also applies if a **Category** is deleted).
- Any **Group Assignments** and their associated files will be deleted (this also applies if a **Category** is deleted).

Managing Group Membership

Add/Enrol Participants

- Step 1:** In the Groups home page, click on **View Categories** and select the group into which students are to be enrolled.
- Step 2:** On the category name's drop-down arrow, click on the **Enrol Users** option.
- Step 3:** A full class list will be displayed. Select the checkbox next to the name of the student/s to enrol them.
- Step 4:** **Save** changes.

Removing Participants

Should a student be deleted from a group, all files corresponding to their profile remain in the system (e.g. discussion posts and assignment submissions).

- Step 1:** Once on the **Manage Groups** page, under the 'View Categories' drop-down list, select the category containing the groups with student to be unenrolled (i.e. deleted).
- Step 2:** From the drop-down arrow beside the category name, select **Enrol Users**.
- Step 3:** On the **Enrol Users** page, under the heading '**Display**', select the group that the student belongs to by clicking the drop-down arrow beside 'All Groups'.
- Step 4:** From the list of students in that group, clear the checkbox to the right of the student's name for any group the student is to be removed from.
- Step 5:** **Save** changes.

Enrol Users – Tutorial Sign Ups

Add Group

Enrolments

Category
Tutorial Sign Ups

Display
All Groups

Search For... [Show Search Options](#)

Last Name ▲, First Name, Username, Org Defined ID	Tut Group 1 - Users: 9	Tut Group 2 - Users: 5	Tut Group 3 - Users: 11	Tut Group 4 - Users: 14	Tut Group 5 - Users: 11
Surname, Name, ABCDEF001, 1234560	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surname, Name, GHIJKL001, 6543210	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

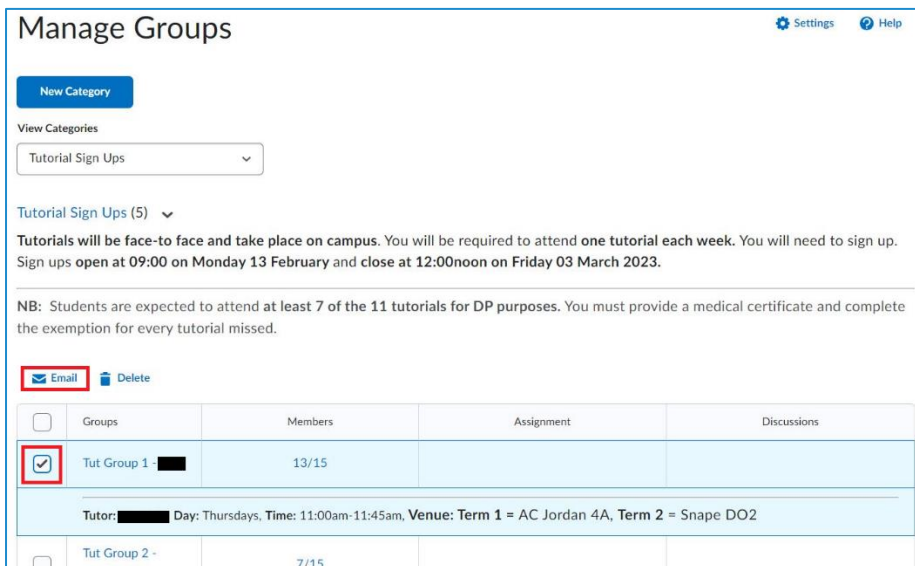
The Student View

Students will see the member capacity (if applicable) and names of their group members. For self-enrolment groups, students will have the option to join and leave groups until the self-enrolment expiry date.

Emailing Specific Groups Directly from Amathuba

The option to email individual or multiple students is available from within the Classlist, Grades, Announcements and **Groups** tools. This emailing function is only used for outgoing messages and as it is not possible to receive incoming emails.

- Step 1:** In **Manage Groups > View Categories**, use the drop-down arrow to view and select the correct **Category** of groups to email.
- Step 2:** Once in the correct Category, select the group/s to email by checking the box to the left of the group name.
- Step 3:** Click the **Email** button above. An email formatting text box will appear with the email addresses of the students in the group automatically added to the 'Bcc' field.



Note: There is no record of outgoing email communication from Amathuba. It is therefore recommended that the teaching team member sending the email includes their email address in the 'To' field as proof that the email was sent.

- Step 4:** Populate the necessary fields and add any attachments (where applicable).
- Step 5:** Once complete, click **Save**.

What Tools Interact with Groups?

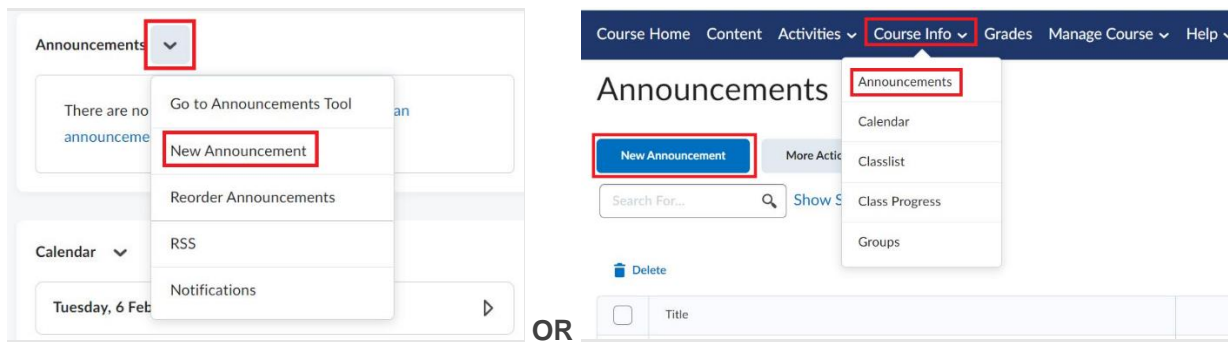
- Announcements
- Classlist
- Grades
- Assignments
- Discussions
- Release Conditions

Groups in Relation to Announcements

To create an announcement using the **Announcements** tool:

Step 1: From the course home page, on the navbar, click 'Course Info' and select **Announcements**.

Step 2: In the Announcements tool, select **New Announcement**.



Announcements ▾

There are no announcements.

Go to Announcements Tool

New Announcement

Reorder Announcements

Calendar ▾

RSS

Notifications

Tuesday, 6 Feb

OR

Course Home Content Activities ▾ **Course Info** ▾ Grades Manage Course ▾ Help ▾

Announcements

New Announcement More Actions

Search For... Show Search

Delete

Announcements

Calendar

Classlist

Class Progress

Groups

Title

Step 3: Enter a **Headline** (required) and relevant text in the Content (required) of the announcement.

New Announcement

General

Headline *

Reminder about tomorrow's Lab Session

Content *

Paragraph | B | I | U | A | [List] | [Link] | [Image] | [Table] | [Code] | Lato (Recom...) | 19px... | [More]

This week you will have the following:

- Practical - Example Title 1 on Thursday and Friday, from **2pm-5pm** in **Sci Lab C** (Computer Science Building).
- Practical information has been uploaded in the *Content* tab > this week's folder > on the lesson page title 'Practicals'.
- **NB:** Please do not forget to bring all your gear/equipment as listed on that 'Practicals' page.

Please be sure to arrive before or on time as we begin promptly on the hour. This session is crucial for the exam.

See you then.

Availability

Show Start Date

Always show start date

If unchecked, only users with permission to edit announcements will be able to see the start date in the Announcements tool.

Start Date

06/05/2024

11:00 AM

End Date

Remove announcement based on end date

10/05/2024

2:00 PM

Step 4: You can now include any of the optional settings below:

- Input the announcement's **Availability**, i.e. **Start Date** and/or **End Date** (if you are scheduling an announcement ahead of time), then click **Save as Draft**, which saves the announcement for you to return to **Publish** later.
- Add **Attachments** (files/audio/video).

Step 5: Hit the **Publish** button to make the announcement immediately live and visible to students. All announcements are available to students from the course home page once published.

Step 6: Click **Cancel** to remove the announcement you are creating.

Sending Announcements to Specific Groups – Additional Release Conditions

To create an announcement for any individual group or multiple groups at once, **Additional Release Conditions** will need to be applied as follows:

- Step 1:** From the navbar, click **Course Info** and select **Announcements**.
- Step 2:** Click **New Announcement** and scroll to the bottom of the page to **Additional Release Conditions**.
- Step 3:** Select **Create and Attach**. A pop-up window titled **Create a New Release Condition** appears.
- Step 4:** Under **Condition Type**, use the drop-down menu to select **Group Enrolment**.
- Step 5:** Under the **Condition Details > Group** drop-down menu, select the specific group to send the announcement to, then click **Create**.
- Step 6:** The pop-up window will close and return to the main page. The **'To access this item, users must satisfy'** section will appear showing the selected group and the restriction attached.
- Step 7:** Click **Publish** (to post the announcement immediately OR click **Save as Draft** (to schedule the announcement for a later date).

Attachments

Add a File

Record Audio

Record Video

Additional Release Conditions

Attach Existing

Create and Attach

 Remove All Conditions

There are no conditions attached to this item.

This week you will have the following:

- Practical - Example
- Practical information
- NB: Please do not

Please be sure to arrive before
See you then.

Availability

Show Start Date

Always show start date
If unchecked, only users with permission

Start Date
06/05/2024 11:00 AM

End Date
 Remove announcement based on
10/05/2024 2:00 PM

Attachments

Add a File Record Audio

Additional Release Conditions

Attach Existing Create and Attach Remove All Conditions

There are no conditions attached to this item.

Publish Save as Draft Cancel

Create a New Release Condition ✕

Release this item when the following condition is met:

Condition Type
Group Enrolment

Condition Details

Group
Lab Group 2 - Khaya

Create Cancel

Additional Release Conditions

Attach Existing Create and Attach Remove All Conditions

To access this item, users must satisfy

All conditions must be met

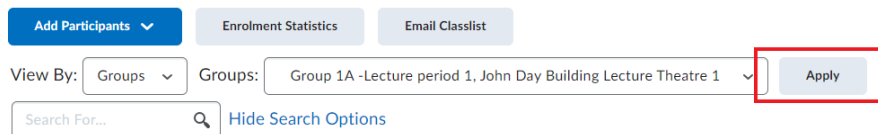
Member of group: Practicals - Lab Groups > Lab Group 2 - Khaya ✕

Publish Save as Draft Cancel

Filtering Groups in the Classlist tool

- Step 1:** On the navbar of the intended course site, click **Course Info > Classlist**.
- Step 2:** In the Classlist home page, click the 'View By' drop-down arrow and select **Groups**, then click **Apply**.
- Step 3:** Once the page reloads, use the **Groups** drop-down arrow that appears to select the group to filter to, then click **Apply**. Once the page reloads, the class list will appear (below) with a list of students belonging to the selected group.

Classlist



The screenshot shows the Classlist tool interface. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Add Participants' (with a dropdown arrow), 'Enrolment Statistics', and 'Email Classlist'. Below these, there is a 'View By:' dropdown menu set to 'Groups'. To its right is a 'Groups:' dropdown menu with the selected group 'Group 1A -Lecture period 1, John Day Building Lecture Theatre 1'. An 'Apply' button is highlighted with a red box. Below the 'View By' dropdown is a search bar with the text 'Search For...' and a magnifying glass icon, followed by a link for 'Hide Search Options'.

Note: It is possible to print a PDF document of this list by clicking on **Print** (top right) > **Print** > **Print** > **Save as PDF**. If you would like to export an Excel or CSV document, please note that you can only do so in the Grades tool, not in the Classlist tool (this process is detailed below, in the section on **Exporting Groups**).

Exporting Groups lists as Excel and CSV (available in the Grades tool)

Exporting Group lists as Excel and CSV files is only possible in the **Grades tool** in Amathuba.

- Step 1:** In the course navbar, click **Grades**.
- Step 2:** On the **Enter Grades** page (default landing page), click on the **View By** drop-down arrow and select **Groups**.
- Step 3:** Click the drop-down arrow that appears next to the **Groups** field and select the group you would like to filter by, then click **Apply**. A class list will appear below containing the list of students in that selected group.
- Step 4:** Click the **Export** button. The page will redirect to the **Export Grades > Export Options** page. Select options based on what is to be included in the spreadsheet.
- From this **Export Options** interface, it is also possible to export:
- Grade items for **all users** or for **particular groups**.
 - Group membership – student group membership (useful when grading tutorial group assignments).
- Step 5:** Select **Export to CSV/Export to Excel**, then click **Download**. Once your download has completed, click **Close** to return to the **Export Grades** screen.
- Step 6:** Click **Cancel** to return to the Grades tool landing page.

Groups and Assignments

Assignments can be configured to be group-scoped. Group submissions allow for any member of the group to submit the assignment on behalf of the group. Any assessments within the assignment will be given to each group member.

Note: Once an Assignment receives submissions, it cannot be changed from individual to group submission or vice-versa.

Filtering Groups in Assignments

Assignments can be filtered to specific groups, e.g. where one needs to mark an assignment of participants in a certain Tutorial group.

Step 1: On the navbar, click **Activities > Assignments**, or select **Assignments** under the **Assessment** section on the **Course Admin** page.

Step 2: Select an assignment that you want to filter by groups.

Step 3: Next to the 'View By' > **Groups** tab, click on the drop-down arrow > select group > **Apply**.

Groups and Discussions

Discussion forums, which can be created during or after the group process, can be restricted to specific groups. Discussions associated with specific groups, restricting the topic to those groups, cannot be linked to the groups at a later stage; the **Set-up discussion areas** checkbox (found under **Manage Groups > New Category > Additional Options > Create Workspace**) should be selected and those settings completed as groups are being created. All forum/ topic setup, availability and restriction options will still be valid and available (see the [Discussions Guide](#))

If the Discussion is created from within 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. Those topics will automatically be restricted to the members of those groups.

Existing forums and topics can be restricted to groups manually by navigating to the topic within the Discussions tool and selecting **Edit Topic** from the drop-down menu:

Edit Topic > click in **Availability Dates & Conditions > Manage Restrictions > Restrict topic/Restrict topic and separate the threads** > select who will see this topic > (select the group from the list) > click **Add**

Things to Consider

Only site owners, lecturers and admin roles with full administrator rights will have permission to create and manage this tool. Individuals enrolled in the tutor roles cannot manage, create, or delete groups.

Additional resources

Additional resources on Groups

- CILT Videos
 - [Amathuba Groups Tool \(Short\) YouTube Video](#)
 - [Signing up for tutorials \(Short\) YouTube Video](#)
 - Webinar: [Amathuba for Tutors 3 Communication & Interaction including Discussions grading in discussions and email](#)
- Amathuba self-paced site: [The Groups tool page](#)

Learn more about Amathuba

We recommend attending a [guided training](#) session or walking through the Amathuba [self-paced course](#). There is also a host of [self-help guides](#), including the Amathuba [Quick Guide](#) and [Getting Started Comprehensive Guide](#).

Further support is available, where you can [book a consultation with a Learning Designer](#) or a 15-min one-on-one [introductory consultation](#) with a Learning Technologist. You may also contact the CILT Helpdesk on [ServiceNow](#) or by email to cilt-helpdesk@uct.ac.za