



## **COTIC: Collaborative Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom**

Project No. 2021-1-BG01-KA220-SCH-000031633

### **INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE FOR PREPARING E-LEARNING COURSE CONTENT USING MOODLE**





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## Introduction

This guide is for course developers and trainers new to e-learning. The guide aids in creating quality e-learning by identifying key instructional components and summarizing what they are, why they are essential, and how to use them most effectively.

Guide instructions based on Moodle v3.11. Moodle is a free and open-source learning management system (LMS) written in PHP and distributed under the GNU General Public License. Developed on pedagogical principles, Moodle is widely used for blended learning, distance education, flipped classrooms, and other e-learning projects in schools, universities, workplaces, and other sectors.

Administering user registrations minimizes administrator intervention while maintaining a high level of security. Different types of authentication: Google, Microsoft, and email self-registration, provide secured and convenient access to the project platform without limitation for teachers and learners.

Moodle uses the following user roles:

- Site administrator - can do everything on the site
- Manager - a lesser administrator role
- Course creator - can create courses
- Teacher - can manage and add content to courses
- Non-editing teacher - can grade in e-courses but not edit content
- Student - can access and participate in courses
- Guest - can view courses but not participate

In this project, only some roles will be implemented.





## How to access the platform

The platform address is <https://cotic.rta.lv>. You will be able to access it using Google, Microsoft authentication, or self-registration using any email address. Some content will be available anonymously – in a guest mode.

The screenshot shows the COTIC login interface. At the top center is the COTIC logo with the tagline 'Collaborative Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom'. Below the logo are two input fields for 'Username' and 'Password'. To the right of the password field is a link for 'Forgotten your username or password?'. Below the password field is a checkbox for 'Remember username' and a 'Log in' button. To the right of the login fields, there is a message: 'Cookies must be enabled in your browser' with a help icon, and 'Some courses may allow guest access'. Below this is a 'Log in as a guest' button. Further down, it says 'Log in using your account on:' followed by buttons for 'Google' and 'Microsoft'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Is this your first time here?' with the text 'For full access to this site, you first need to create an account.' and a 'Create new account' button.

Figure 1. Authentication options





## Course management

### How to create a course

There are several ways to create an e-course:

- Create a new, empty course;
- Upload an existing e-course from a different Moodle site.

Only the administrator ([admin@rta.lv](mailto:admin@rta.lv)) creates or imports E-courses in the project platform.

Courses can be organized into categories by some criteria: language, topics, etc.





## General recommendations for course developers

- 1) First of all, online courses must be learner-oriented! Try to predict what the learner is waiting for from the course and what knowledge and competencies he or she is looking for. Course content must be filtered and analyzed; only valuable information should be published.
- 2) Course annotation, syllabus, acquired knowledge, and competencies must be defined at the beginning of the course.
- 3) All quizzes and assignments must relate to the course content.
- 4) Quizzes and assignments are an essential part of the learning process, but always use feedback and show correct answers to students where it is acceptable.
- 5) Main course content must be available as HTML resources, not as downloadable files. Do not use PDF, DOC(DOCX), PPT(PPTX), etc. If copyrights protect some extra content, it could be added as a PDF file.
- 6) Learning content must be added using Moodle activity *Lesson* or at least as a resource *Book*.
- 7) Completion time for each topic of the course and each activity/resource (tests, lessons, video, books) must be evaluated and visible to the learner. Online learners should have the possibility to plan and manage their time.
- 8) Moodle feature *Completion tracking* must be enabled and configured for activities and resources. Progress indicator motivates learner.
- 9) Many factors must be considered, but it is good to integrate student-to-student and student-to-tutor collaboration activities into the course like Forum, Chats, Wiki, etc. There should be an *Announcements forum* – one-way messages from a tutor, *Introduce yourself forum* – a forum where students can meet each other and some public forum to allow learners to ask questions about course content and the learning process.





## Course Design Checklists

### Course objectives checklist

1. Have you analyzed the eLearning needs and identified the budget and time constraints?
2. Have all eLearning course audiences been examined and analyzed?
3. Are the eLearning course objectives clear, and do they include the criteria for evaluation?
4. Are the eLearning course requirements consistent with the overall objectives?
5. Does the structure of the eLearning course meet instructional goals?
6. Have you completed the task analysis?
7. Is the content offered in smaller, bite-sized chunks for the learner?
8. Have you made the headings clear and concise?
9. Is the information grouped?
10. Have you included a sufficient number of presentations (multimedia, etc.)?
11. Does every eLearning course's module contain a summary and your eLearning course a glossary of key terms?

### Course content checklist

1. Does the content flow free of grammatical or spelling errors?
2. Is the content current and in line with the core curriculum?
3. Does the content help to achieve the desired learning objectives?
4. Is referenced content properly credited and quoted?
5. Is the language used clear and descriptive (without being verbose)?
6. Have you chosen text appropriate for the target audience and not gender-specific?
7. Is your tone consistent and appropriate?
8. Have all stats, facts, and dates been checked and referenced?





9. Is the information consistent? For example, are all dates listed in the same manner?
10. Has capitalization and punctuation been used correctly?
11. Is the content available in all local languages?

### Course graphics and fonts checklist

1. Have you only used a maximum of four fonts throughout the entire course?
2. Is the body text in the same font and decorative text-only used in the headers?
3. Have you included the correct line spacing and paragraph length?
4. Have you used the correct font sizes and colors (are they all visible)?
5. Is the body text left-justified?
6. Have you included a minimal amount of bold/italicized words?
7. Are the images relevant, compressed, and re-sized? Do you legally own all of them?
8. Are all images the correct file type and consistent (in terms of quality and size)?
9. Are screen captures free of personal data and current?

### Course multimedia checklist

1. Have you included relevant and legally owned images and video elements in the eLearning course?
2. Are all files compressed for easy download?
3. Are all multimedia elements consistent (in terms of size and quality)?
4. Is the audio synced to the video presentations within the eLearning course?
5. Is the narration clear and easy to understand?
6. Have you ensured that the user can control the audio or video?







### Course navigation checklist

1. Is the eLearning course easy to navigate for the learner?
2. Are all eLearning course modules featured in their correct sequence?
3. Are hyperlinks displayed clearly, and do they all work correctly?
4. Have you included backward links so that learners can return to previous screens?
5. Is there a table of contents and a map of the course?

### Course technical issues checklist

1. Does the eLearning course load within a reasonable time frame?
2. Has an FAQ page with hyperlinks to other areas of the eLearning course been created?
3. Is the eLearning course viewable in all of the major web browsers?
4. Are assessments being appropriately timed?

### Course design checklist

1. Do you have a clear syllabus at the beginning of the eLearning course?
2. Is the eLearning course aesthetically uniform and have you included branding elements?
3. Is the color usage consistent and appropriate?
4. Are all of the elements visible with the chosen color scheme?
5. Does at least half of the screen consist of white space to keep the look clean and organized?
6. Have you verified that all the content fits the screen (no horizontal/vertical scrolling)?
7. Have you avoided backgrounds/patterns that may be distracting for the learner?



## Get started with Moodle

- [Browse features](#) – overview of Moodle features
- [Teacher quick guide](#) - short overview for beginners

## Managing a Moodle course

A *course* in Moodle is an area where a teacher will add [resources](#) and [activities](#) for their students to complete. It might be a simple page with downloadable documents, or it might be a complex set of tasks where learning progresses through interaction.

The course page is made up of central sections which contain the tasks and (if desired) [blocks](#) to the side. The course teacher has control over the layout of the [course homepage](#) and can change it at any time. Progress can be [tracked](#) in several ways.

Students can be [enrolled](#) in the course manually by the teacher, automatically by the administrator, or allowed to register themselves. Students can also be added to [groups](#) if they need to be separated from classes sharing the same course or if tasks need to be differentiated.





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## Sources of information

- The eLearning Course Design Checklist - <https://elearningindustry.com/the-ultimate-elearning-course-design-checklist>
- Moodle documentation - [https://docs.moodle.org/311/en/Main\\_page](https://docs.moodle.org/311/en/Main_page)

