

USER MANUAL ADVANCED GROUP TOOL

BUILDING BLOCK VERSION: 4.1



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PREFACE

DESCRIPTION

As an addition to Blackboard, the University of Groningen has developed a program for more efficient group management. The Advanced Group Tool (AGT) enables users to create large amount of groups, enroll students in groups within your courses and manage groups by importing and exporting them, in a quick and easy way. Managing your groups has never been so simple.

Remark:

This manual was originally created by the University of Groningen. If necessary, this manual is adapted to the specific context of Tilburg University.

FUNCTIONALITY

INTRODUCTION GROUP FUNCTIONALITY BLACKBOARD

Since the arrival of version 9.1, the group functionality in Blackboard has been extended. An important change is the replacement of groups by group sets. By using group sets, settings for several groups can be adjusted by just one click.

Compared to the standard group functionality in Blackboard, the Advanced Group Tool Building Block adds a couple of useful options:

- In the standard Blackboard group functionality, students can subscribe in just one group per group set at the same time. In the Advanced Group Tool, students can subscribe in several groups at the same time.
- In the standard Blackboard group functionality, students can enroll in a group if self-enrollment is enabled, but cannot unenroll themselves. In the Advanced Group Tool, unenrolling is also possible.
- In the Advanced Group Tool you can export your groups to a CSV file. That makes it easy to update your group administration.
- In the Advanced Group Tool you can import groups. In combination with the export function groups and group sets can be copied to other courses. The standard Blackboard group functionality lacks this function.
- In the Advanced Group Tool you can create a print list containing all group enrollments, with just one click. Useful for your administration!
- The Advanced Group Tool offers an option for hiding fully enrolled groups. The standard Blackboard group functionality does not contain this function.

With the addition of the AGT, there are now two ways to create groups:

- **Tools, Groups: Standard Blackboard Group Management,**
- **Control Panel, Users and Groups, Groups: Advanced Group Tool.**

You can view and modify created groups in both environments.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The AGT is only accessible to users with certain roles, such as instructor or teachings assistant, via the Control Panel. Under 'Users and Groups' click 'Groups' and the main screen of the AGT appears.

status	Title	# Groups	# Enrolled	Selfenroll
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous groups	6	9	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Odracht samenwerken	2	0	Enroll for Odracht samenwerken
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 29 09	5	1	Enroll for test 29 09
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 4 oktober	3	1	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Werkgroepen	12	0	

Figure 1: Starting screen for the AGT, overview of available group sets.

The main screen for the AGT is shown in figure 1. This screen is the starting point for all group management tasks.

MANAGING GROUP SETS

All groups are part of a group set: a set of groups belonging together. For example a group set called Practicals, with groups Practicals 1 to 9 in it. The managing of group sets is done from the main page. In the following sections all functionalities related to group sets are described.

Creating a new Group set

By using the button 'Create Groupset' you can create new groups. When selecting this button a dropdown menu folds out and you are given the following options:

- *Create Groups with Manual Enroll:* After you defined the groups in your group set, you are given the possibility to manually populate your created groups.
- *Create Groups with Random Enroll:* After you defined the groups in your group set, the students are distributed automatically, at random over the groups.
- *Create Groups with Self Enroll:* After you defined the groups in your group set, the students will be able to enroll themselves in a group of their own choice.
- *Create just Groups:* This will create only the group set with groups, but allows you to decide how to populate these groups later on.

If you're not familiar with the Group Tool, we recommend you to choose this option.

After you have selected your preferred enrollment option you will be directed to the form for the creation of the group set and related groups. This process is divided into 4 steps:

Step 1 (figure 2) Here you can enter general information such as a name and a more detailed description of the group set. It is also possible to indicate whether a user can edit his group starting page or not (Allow Personalization).

Figure 2: General information of the group set.

Step 2 (Figure 3) This allows the user to make the actual groups within the group set. Choose a general name for the groups, indicate how many groups you want to create and what the maximum size of the groups will be (choosing '0' for unlimited). Then click 'add groups'. The groups will now be created according to the settings you entered. The section 'Managing groups within a group set' on page 8 provides more information on editing existing groups in a group set.

Figure 3: Creating groups within the group set.

Step 3 (Figure 4) Shows the availability of the tools inside a group of this group set. Checking the box in front of a tool will make it available. You can change the availability of the tools at a later stage.

3. Tool Availability

Available Tools

Email

Discussion Board

Tasks

Collaboration

File Exchange

Blogs

No grading

Grade : Points possible :

Journals

No grading

Grade : Points possible :

Wikis

No grading

Grade : Points possible :

Cancel Submit

Figure 4: Tools available within a group.

Step 4 Confirm the creation of the new group set by clicking 'Submit'. Or cancel the creation of the set by clicking 'Cancel'. You will then return to the homepage without any changes being made.

Editing group sets

The settings applied after creating a group set, can be edited by selecting the dropdown menu behind the name of the group set and selecting 'Edit' (figure 5). You will be directed back to the creation form for the group set and you can adjust your settings.

<input type="checkbox"/> status	Title	# Groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous groups	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name of this Groupset	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opdracht samenwerking	
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 29 09	
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 4 oktober	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Werkgroepen	

- > Edit
- > Auto Enroll
- > Manual Enroll
- > Self Enrollment
- > Export
- > Import

Figure 5: Editing a group set.

Activating or disabling a group set

A group set can be disabled. The groups within a group set will be disabled as well. This means that students will not be able to see themselves as a member of these groups and cannot use the tools within the groups.

In the main screen of the AGT a group set can be activated or disabled by checking the box in front of the particular group set and selecting the preferred action (either 'Make available' or 'Make unavailable') in the dropdown menu 'Availability' (figure 6).

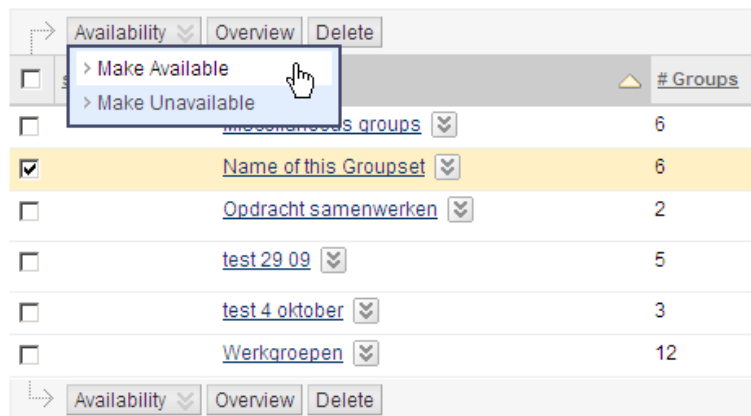


Figure 6: Activating or disabling a group set.

Removing group sets

If a group set and the groups it contains are no longer needed, both can be deleted. Check the box in front of the particular group set and select 'Delete'. Please note that documents submitted by members of the deleted group will remain in the Grade Center.

MANAGING GROUPS WITHIN A GROUP SET

Created groups and group sets can always be edited. This can be done in the main screen of the AGT by checking the box in front of the particular group set and then select 'Edit' in the dropdown menu behind the group set.

Changing the availability of groups

To change the availability of groups, check the boxes in front of the groups you wish to change. Then select in the dropdown menu 'Availability' either 'Make available' or 'Make unavailable'. Select 'Submit' on the bottom of the page to save the changes.

Please note: If the status of groups is set to unavailable, students cannot see their enrollments or use the tools within a group.

Changing group sizes

To change the size of existing groups, check the boxes in front of the groups and select 'Resize'. Set the new group size in the pop-up screen and select 'Confirm Resize' (figure 7). If you don't want to change the group size, click 'Cancel'.

2. Groups

Course members 9
Not enrolled 9
Not enrolled students 4

Add groups by giving a name, the number of groups that need to be created and the group size.

Name: Number of groups

→ Availability ▾ Resize Empty M

Status Size # enrolled # students Description

Status	Size	# enrolled	# students	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 3

Figure 7: Change group size

Click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page to save your changes.

Emptying Groups

To remove all enrollments from a group select the preferred group and select 'Empty'. Confirm by clicking 'Ok' and all enrollments will be deleted. To save these changes click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page.

Moving groups to another Group set

To move a group to another group set, select the preferred group and select the dropdown menu 'Move'. Then select the preferred group set you wish to move the group to (figure 8). A pop-up screen will appear asking you to confirm your action by clicking 'Ok'. You will see a marking behind the group you want to move. Click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page to confirm moving the selected group.

2. Groups

Course members 9
Not enrolled 9
Not enrolled students 4

Add groups by giving a name, the number of groups that need to be created and the group size.

Name: Number of Groups: Group Size: Add Groups

→ Availability ▾ Resize Empty Move ▾ Delete

Status Size # enrolled # students Description

Status	Size	# enrolled	# students	Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 1
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	0	0	Groep 3

Figure 8: Moving groups to another group set

Removing groups

To remove a group from a group set, select the preferred group and select 'Remove'. A pop-up screen will appear to confirm your request. Select 'Ok', and click 'Submit' at the bottom of the page.

MANAGING GROUP ENROLLMENTS

Overview of enrollments in a group set

It is possible to show an overview of all the groups and their enrollments. To create an overview select one or more group sets in the main screen of the AGT and select 'Overview' in the options above. You will see an overview as in figure 9.

The overview can be sorted on different fields. Select the desired field in the drop down menu after: 'Sort group members on'.

To print an overview, you can use the 'Print' button. A printer friendly page will be displayed.

Sort group members on

Miscellaneous groups

[groep 1 \(Enrolled: 1\)](#)

Status	Username	First Name	Last Name	Course Role
				Student

[Groep 2 \(Enrolled: 1\)](#)

Status	Username	First Name	Last Name	Course Role
				Student

[Groep 3 \(Enrolled: 2\)](#)

Status	Username	First Name	Last Name	Course Role
				Student
				Student

Figure 9: Overview of enrollments in a group set.

Overview enrollments for students

It is also possible to offer your students an overview of the enrollments in a particular group set. In a Content Area of the Course you can add this overview by opening the drop down menu 'Add Interactive Tool' en selecting the option 'Groupset View'

In the screen that follows you can choose the group set of which you want to show an overview. In the Course appears a Content Item as shown in figure 10. Students can select this item and they will see an overview (depending on your settings) of enrollments in the groups.

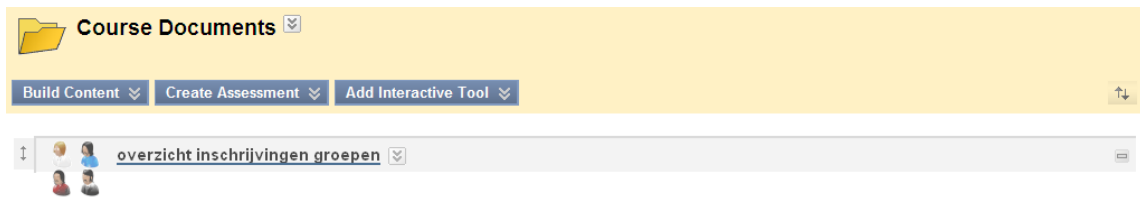


Figure 10: Overview enrollments for students in a Content Area.

Random Enroll: Dividing students automatically among groups

Within a group set, students can be automatically divided among the existing groups. To do this, choose the option 'Auto (Random) Enroll' in the dropdown menu behind a group set (figure 11). This will display a menu supplying additional information about the distribution (figure 12). Four options for distribution are available:

- *Only enroll students:* If this option is selected, only students will be divided among the groups. If this option is not selected, teaching assistants and instructors will also be divided.
- *Only enroll active course members:* Within a course or the system in general, users can be disabled. This option allows those users to be excluded from the dividing process.
- *Only enroll in available groups:* Within a group set certain groups can be disabled. When this option is selected, users will not be put into groups that are unavailable.
- *Distribute evenly:* If this option is selected, the AGT will try to divide the users evenly among the possible groups. If this option is not selected, the AGT will fill the first group to full capacity, then move on to the second group and so on.

To start the chosen process click 'Submit'. You will return to the main screen, and the AGT will report on the number of enrollments performed. When the available space in the groups is too small, the AGT will display a warning message.

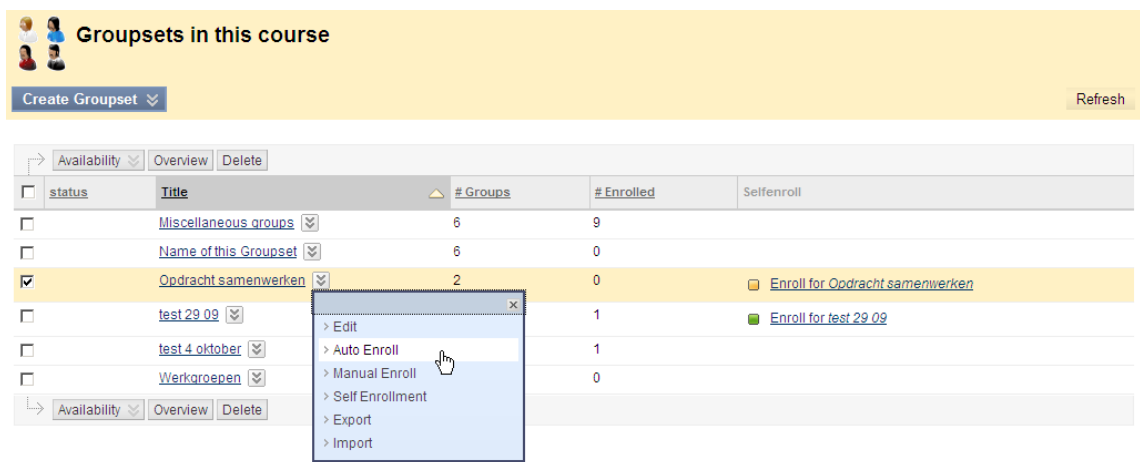


Figure 11: Automatically enroll students among groups.

Automatically Enroll Users

Cancel Submit

1. Groupset information

Groupset	Name of this Groupset
Groupset capacity	18
# Groups in Set	6 (# available 6)
# Course members	9
# Not Enrolled	9
# Students Not Enrolled	4

2. Distribution Options

Note: only users who are currently not enrolled in a group in this groupset will be enrolled.

only enroll students
Course members with a role other than student (instructors, teaching assistants, etc) will not be enrolled.

only enroll active coursemembers
Only users with an available account and available enrollment to this course will be enrolled.

only enroll in available groups
Users will only be enrolled to groups that are available.

distribute evenly
All groups will end up with (roughly) the same number of users enrolled. When you do not select this option then all course members will be enrolled in as few groups as possible (meaning that those groups will be as full as possible).

3. Submit

Cancel Submit

Figure 12: Options for dividing users automatically among groups.

Manual Enroll: Dividing students manually among groups

If a group set has been created with the enrollment option 'Manual Enroll' it is possible to divide students manually among groups. Select the option 'Manual Enroll' in the dropdown menu behind a group set in the AGT main screen (figure 13).

Alternatively you can select 'Edit' followed by the drop down menu 'Enroll users'. Here you can select 'Manual Enroll'.

Groupsets in this course

Create Groupset Refresh

status	Title	# Groups	# Enrolled	Selfenroll
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous groups	6	9	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name of this Groupset	6	0	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opdracht samenwerken		0	Enroll for Opdracht samenwerken
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 29 09		1	Enroll for test 29 09
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 4 oktober		1	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Werkgroepen		0	

Dropdown menu for 'Name of this Groupset':

- > Edit
- > Auto Enroll
- > Manual Enroll
- > Self Enrollment
- > Export
- > Import

Figure 13: Dividing students manually among groups.

On the following screen you will see the 'Coursemembers not in any group', showing the persons who are not yet a member of a group (figure 14). By checking the box in front of the user's name you can select this person and move them to a group by clicking 'Enroll'. A dropdown menu opens showing the groups you have created. Selecting one of the groups will place the user in this group.

Manually Enroll Users hide inactive | expand/collapse all

On this page you can manually enroll users to groups. All changes are immediately in effect. As an instructor you are not limited to the maximum number of users in a group (a limit you defined yourself). It is possible to filter the list with coursemembers not in any group by typing part of someone's (first or last)name or email address in the filter.

Inactive users (people with an unavailable account and/or course membership) can be hidden from view (top righthand corner of this page).

Coursemembers not in any group

Enroll filter:

Status	Username	Name	Course Role
<input type="checkbox"/>			Student
<input type="checkbox"/>			Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>			Student
<input type="checkbox"/>			Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>			Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>			Student

Enroll

Group Enrollments

- Groep 1	# enrolled: 0 / 5
- Groep 2	# enrolled: 0 / 5

Figure 14: Coursemembers not in any group.

In the bottom of the screen the various groups are displayed. By clicking on the '+' button the members of the group are displayed. To remove a user from a group, select the user and click 'Unenroll'. To move a user to another group, click 'Move' and select the preferred group. It is also possible to give a user membership to more than one group. To do this select 'Copy', and then select the group you want to copy the enrollment to.

The filter in the upper right provides the means to search the list of users by name, last name or email address.

Self Enroll: Students can enroll themselves in a group

It is possible to allow students to enroll themselves in a group. When a student visits a course he or she will see an overview of the available groups and can choose the group into which he or she wants to be enrolled.

Groupsets in this course Refresh

Create Groupset

Availability Overview Delete

status	Title	# Groups	# Enrolled	Selfenroll
<input type="checkbox"/>	Miscellaneous groups	6	9	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of this Groupset	6	0	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Opracht samenwerken	2	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll for Opracht samenwerken
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 29 09		1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enroll for test 29 09
<input type="checkbox"/>	test 4 oktober		1	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Werkroepen		0	


Availability Overview Delete

Edit
 Auto Enroll
 Manual Enroll
Self Enrollment
 Export
 Import

Figure 15: Self enrollment for students.

To do this, select the option 'Self Enrollment' in the dropdown menu behind a group set in the AGT main screen (figure 15). A button in the Course Menu will be created, which will provide students with a means to enroll themselves in a group. In the first section of

the screen that follows after selecting 'Self Enrollment', a name must be given for this button (figure 16). For example: 'Group Enroll'.

 **Easy Selfenrollment Setup**

This form creates a menu button with an item that allows students to enroll themselves to a group (that is available and has not reached its configured maximum number of members). It is also possible to add such selfenroll items to any content area using the *Add Interactive Tool* button (item called "Groupset Selfenrollment") instead of using this form.

Cancel
Submit

* Indicates a required field.

1. Information

Groupset	Opdracht samenwerken
* Label Menubutton	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Group enroll"/>

2. Enroll Page Settings

Students can enroll in more than one group	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
Students can unenroll once enrolled	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
Students can create groups	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
Show groups that are full	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
Show group descriptions	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
Show already enrolled users	<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no
Show course role (other than student) of enrolled users	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no

3. Availability

Selfenrollment will be available to students from Thursday 6 October 7:30. Reason for this early time of the day is that this will reduce the load on the system. Experience shows that students often and in large numbers try to refresh the page for selfenrollment before it comes available, what may lead to a slow system. Early in the morning the number of online (awake) students will be lower, thereby reducing this peak load.

4. Submit

Cancel
Submit

Figure 16: Easy Selfenrollment Setup.

You can then specify a number of settings:

- *Students can enroll in more than one group:* when 'yes' is selected, students can enroll themselves in more than one group.
- *Students can unenroll once enrolled:* If 'no' is selected, students cannot change from one group to another.
- *Students can create groups:* if 'yes' is selected, students can create their own groups and enroll themselves in these groups.
- *Show groups that are full:* when 'yes' is selected, students will also see groups that are full, and in which they cannot enroll themselves.
- *Show group descriptions:* if this option is selected students can see the description of the groups, provided when they were created.
- *Show already enrolled users:* if 'yes' is selected, students can see the users already enrolled in a group.
- *Show course role (other than student) of enrolled users:* if 'yes' is selected, the course role is shown behind the names of the members of the Group.

Students can only enroll themselves in groups that are not filled to capacity. The maximum of enrollments in a group can be decided when creating or editing a group set (see page 6).

EXPORTING GROUPS

In the new version of the Advanced Group Tool it is possible to export groups and group sets to a CSV file (used by Excel). This can be useful if you want to use the same group structure in multiple courses.

To export group sets, select the option 'Export' in the dropdown menu behind a group set in the AGT main screen.

Export group enrollments

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Export CSV file

* **Filename**

Field delimiter (semicolon works best with Microsoft Excel)

Include tools yes no

Include empty groups yes no

Include fields

- username
- group name
- first (given) name
- last (family) name
- email address
- course role

2. Submit Cancel Submit

Figure 17: Exporting groups.

The screen shown in figure 17 will be displayed. Here you can choose the name of the file, the group set will be exported too, and the way data entries will be separated in the file (semicolon is recommended when using Excel).

At 'Include tools' choose 'yes' if you also wish to add to the file which tools are available for the group (such as discussion board, email, etc).

'Include empty groups' must be selected in order to include groups, with no users enrolled in them, in the CSV file.

The 'Include fields' options allows the user to specify which parts of the data in the group set are exported. Username and group name have to be included, name, last name and email address are optional. Click 'Submit' to create the CSV file and prepare it for download. Select 'Save' to download to file to your computer.

IMPORTING GROUPS

It is possible to import groups in the new version of the Advanced Group Tool. To import groups, a CSV file is needed just as you get when exporting groups (see page 15). To import groups click 'Create Groupset' in the AGT main screen and select the option 'Import from CSV file' in the dropdown menu.

Import Groups/Enrollments

Cancel Submit

1. Import CSV file

* Attach File

Field delimiter

2. Submit

Cancel Submit

Figure 18: Importing groups.

The CSV file must contain at least the username and group name of the group in which the user must be enrolled. Also first name, last name, email address and role within the Course can be imported.