MANAGING COURSES	Section 2

2.1 The Dashboard

2.1.1 Site home

"***Site home***" is a customisable "dashboard" page for providing users with links to their courses and activities within them, such as unread forum posts and upcoming assignments." This is shown in Figure 2.1.

Below the navigation bar are three columns. The far-left and far-right columns contain tool blocks, while the center column contains your course content and activities. The topmost tool block on the left is the Navigation block. From here, you and your students can:

- Access your customised dashboard "Site home" which has been set as the default home page.
- Navigate to different site pages.
- Navigate to your profile details like: Forums posts and discussions you are involved into, your personal blog, messages, your private file and your badges.
- Get details about the current course like participants, badges and the topics within the course.

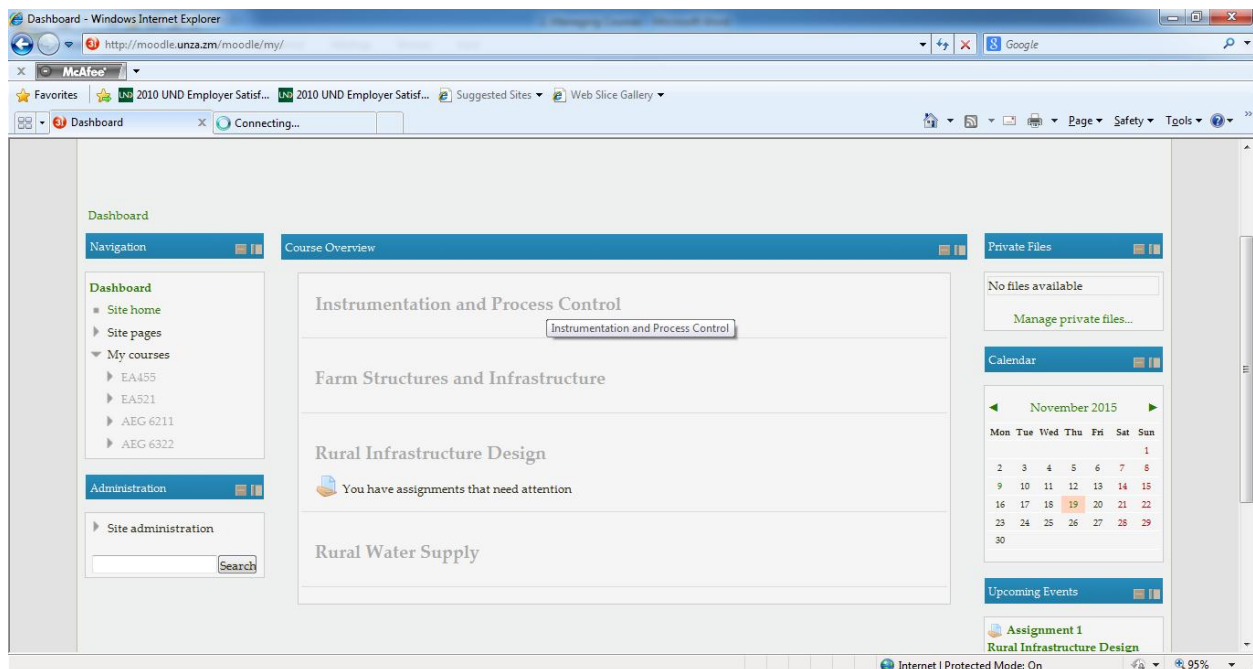Navigate to your courses in which you are enrolled as a teacher, student or any other role.

Figure 2.1 Dashboard

2.1.2 My Courses

On the left side of the front page, you'll see the "***My Courses***" tree under the Navigation Block, which includes a list of all the courses you are teaching, as shown in Figure 2.1. You can access your courses by clicking on the course name in the block.

Starting with the upper-left corner of the course page, as shown in Figure 2.2, you will see the names of your courses you are teaching as entered when the courses were created. The system administrator either entered your course names by hand or obtained them from institution's course database.

Beneath the Navigation Block is the Administration block.

- Assuming you have been assigned the role of teacher, you will find links to set your course options, assign roles, perform backups of the course, and manage student grades.
- You can also switch role as a Student to have a look upon how any resource or activity will be visible to students.
- You can also edit settings related to your profile like changing password, messaging settings, blog settings and badges settings.
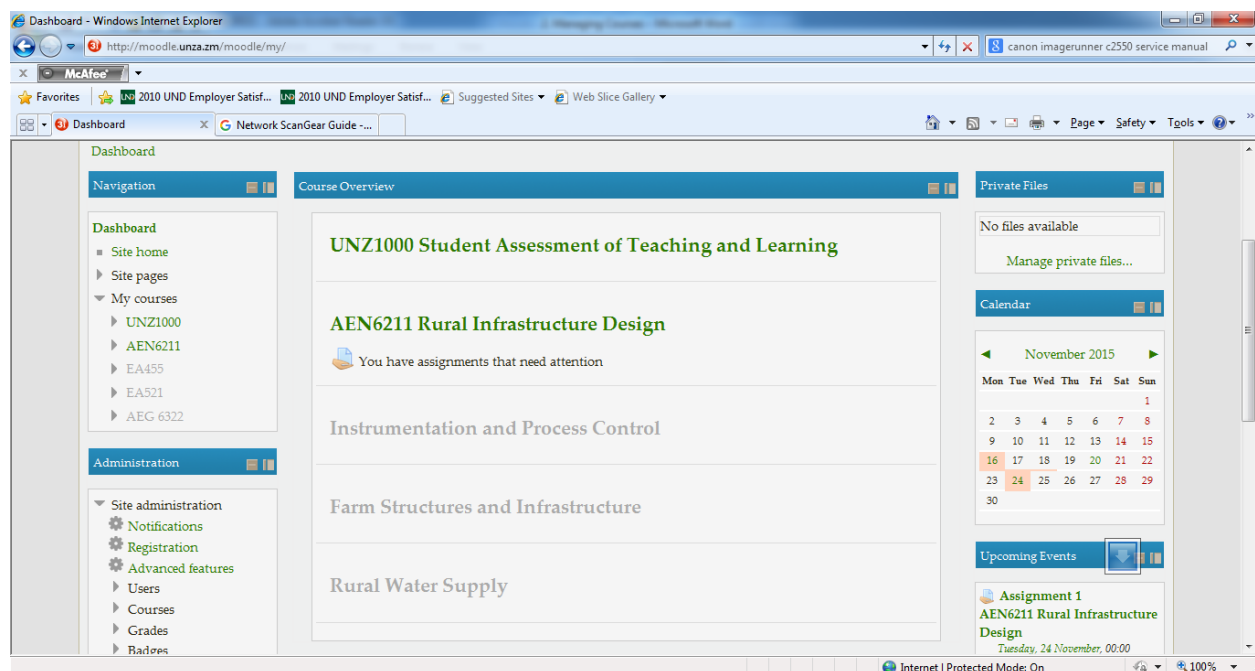

Figure 2.2 Course administration page.

2.2   Managing the Course

The Course Administration section of the [Settings block](#) allows lecturers to manage different aspects of their course. The available options are shown in Figure 2.3.

- Edit Settings - this takes you to the [Course settings page](#) (which you see when first creating a course. Here you can, for example, rename the course, change its [format](#) from Weekly to Topic or alter the number of sections.
- Users = this is where you can enrol new users - see [Course enrolment](#) for details on how to do this.
- Filters - here is where you can enable or disable any allowed [Filters](#) for your course.
- Grades -this section allows you to view, add and edit your students' [Grades](#). (You might also have [Outcomes](#) enabled here too.)

Figure 2.3 Course administration options

- Backup/Restore - these links allow you to make copies of your course or bring in courses backed up elsewhere. See [Course backup](#) and [Course restore](#) for more information.Import -you can import activities into your course here.
- Publish - if your Moodle admin allows it, you can [publish your course](#) to one of the [Community hubs](#) here.
- Reset -this lets you remove all old user information at the end of an academic year or session in order to start afresh. The page [Reset course](#) gives you more information about this.
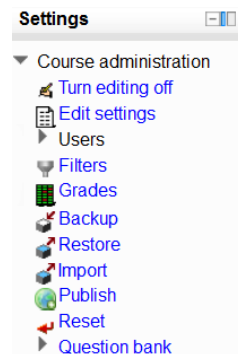
NOTE: These links are only available to teachers of the course. Students will see their own version of the block which will display a link to their own gradebook and, if enabled, their own course reports.

2.3   Course Settings

The settings page, as shown in Figure 2.4, where you set the course format, also gives you access to a number of important course options. You'll find it is important to take a moment to review the settings for your course to ensure that it behaves the way you want it to.

To change course settings:
- Click Edit Settings in the Administration block under the course administration sub tree on your course page.
- Review each of the general options to ensure they are appropriate for your course:
    - *(i)*   *Course Full name:* This is the name that is displayed on the top header of everypage in your course and also in the course listings page. The name should be descriptive enough so students can easily identify the course in which they are working, but it shouldn't be too long.

(ii)   *Course Short name:* Enter the institutional shorthand for your course, e.g. AEN621I. The short name also appears in the navigation bar at the top of the page.

(iii)   *Course Category:* Your system administrator may have created course categories,such as department labels, to help students and teachers find their courses.
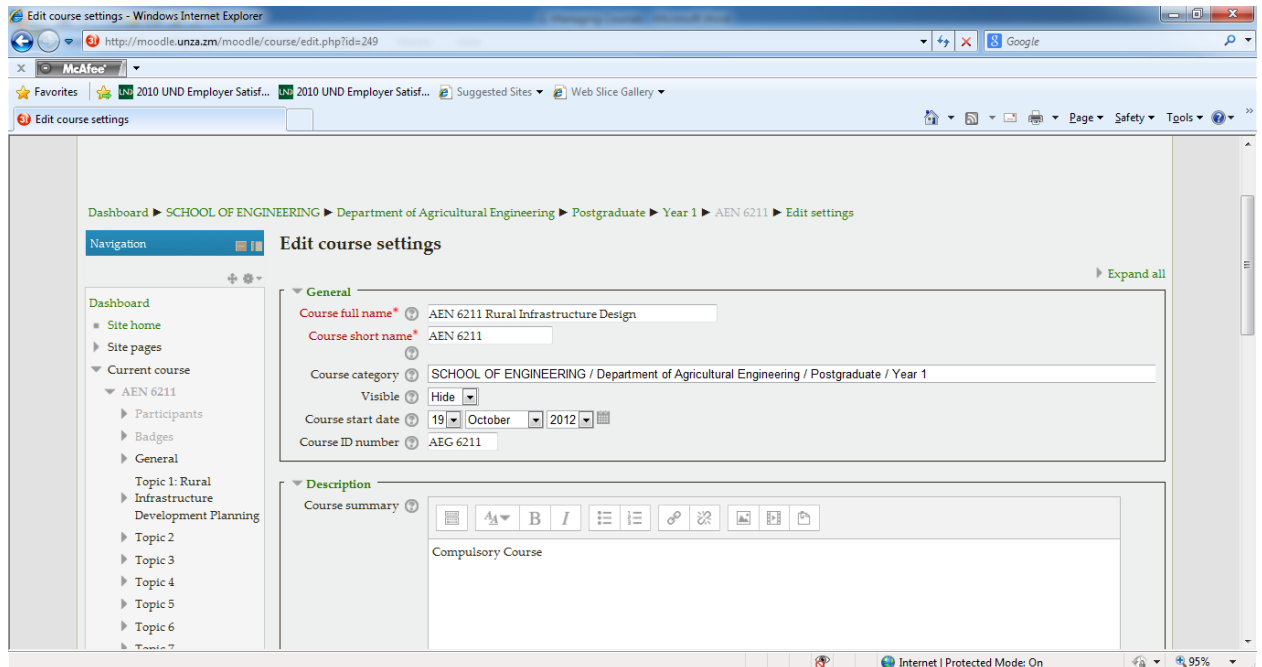

Figure 2.4 Course setting page

(iv)   *Visible:* You can hide the course from students in case it is under preparation or some modification by using this setting. If it's Hidden then only teachers and Site administrators can access this course.

(v)   *Course start date:* The start date is the day the course is first active. If you are using a weekly course format, the first week will start on the date you set here. The start date is also used in course reports as the earliest possible date for which you can obtain logs, activity, and participation reports. In general, if your course does have a real starting date, then it makes sense to set this date to that, no matterwhat course format you are using.

(vi)   *Course ID number:* The course ID number is used to provide a link between Moodle and your institution's backend data systems. Most Student Information Systems (SIS) has a unique identifier for each course. Moodle has its own unique identifier, which is different from the SIS ID. This field is used by Moodle to store the SIS unique ID so Moodle will know which course the SIS is talking about when synchronizing courses and enrollments.

(vii)   *Course Summary:* The summary appears in the course listings page. A good one-paragraph summary will help communicate the essence of your course to your students.

(viii)   *Course Summary Files:* If you wish to add some images to the course summarythen you can add it here which will be displayed in the list of the courses together with the summary.

(ix)   *Course Format:*

    (a)   Course Format: This is where you can set the course format as discussed previously.

    (b)   Number of Sections: Use this to set the number of sections your course will have. If you need to change this later, you can. Increasing the number results in sections being added to the bottom of your course page; reducing the number results in sections being removed from the bottom of your course page, and any content in them hidden.

    (c)   Hidden sections: When you hide an up coming topic section to prevent your students from jumping ahead, you can choose to display the title as a collapsed section or simply hide the topic altogether. Displaying the collapsed sections gives your students a road map of the upcoming topics or weeks, so it's probably a good idea to leave this on the default setting.

    (d)   Course Layout: You can change the course layout to display whole course on a single page or else to split it into several pages.

(x)   *Appearance:*

    (a)   Force Language: If you want to take your course in a specific language youcan force it here. If you do so, your students cannot change languages within the course. For example for language teaching course like German, French etc.

    (b)   News items to show: Use this setting to determine the number of course news items displayed on the course page.

    (c)   Show gradebook to students: This setting allows you to select whether students can see the gradebook. If set to No, it doesn't stop instructors from recording grades, but simply prevents the students from seeing them.

    (d)   Show activity reports: This setting allows students to view their activity history in your course. This is useful if you want students to reflect on their level of participation.

(xi)   *Files and Uploads:*

    Maximum upload size: This setting limits the size of files you or your students up load to the course. Your system administrator sets the maximum size for the system, but you can choose to make the limit smaller than the system maximum. You can also further limit the size of files that your students up load as assignment submissions and for other activities. (We'll cover them as they come up later in the book.)

(xii)   *Guest access:*

    (a)   Allow Guest access: This setting determines whether a user can access the course as a guest, without being required to enroll.

    (b)   Password: A password allows guest access to the course to be restricted to only those who know the password. Guests will be required to supply the password each time they access the course.

(xiii)   *Groups:*

    (a)   Group Mode: Here you can define the group mode at the course level by a pull down menu. "No groups", "Separate groups" and "Visible groups" are the choices. The selected setting will be the default group mode for all activities defined within that course. The group setting can affect what users see in the Participants list and who they can interact with in activities.

(b)   Force Group Mode: If the group mode is "forced" at a course-level, then this particular group mode will be applied to every activity in that course. This will override any activities that may have a special group setting.

(c)   Default grouping: If groupings are enabled, a default grouping for course activities and resources may be set. Groupings are used in case if you want to make an activity (such as an assignment or a quiz) visible to only one set of users within a course, you need first to put the users into a group and then put them into a grouping. A single grouping can house one group or several groups. We will discuss about Groupings in the later chapter.

(xiv)   *Role Renaming:*

You can rename the roles used in your course. For example, you may wish to rename the Teacher role as "Facilitator", "Tutor" or "Guide". These ew role names will appear within the course. For example on the participants and the override permissions pages.

- Once you've made all your selections, click the "Save changes" button.

2.4   Course Formats

Moodle provides you with a number of options for the general format of your course. You can choose to order your course chronologically by week, conceptually by topic, or socially with a big forum as the central organizing principle.

The course format determines the layout of the course page. By default there are four course formats in Moodle:

- *Single activity format* - The single activity format only has 1 section, and allows the teacher to add one activity only to the course. When the single activity format is selected, a drop down menu appears for the teacher to choose the activity they wish to use. The best uses of this format are for displaying a single activity or resource (such as a Quiz) on the course page.
- *Social format* - This format is oriented around one main forum, the social forum, which appears listed on the main page. It is useful for situations that are more free form. They may not even be courses. A forum is displayed on the course page
- *Topics format* - The course is organized into topic sections that a teacher can give titles to. Each topic section consists of activities, resources and labels. This is great to use if your course is objective based and each objective may take different amounts of time to complete.
- *Weekly format* - The course is organized week by week, with a clear start date and a finish date. Moodle will create a section for each week of your course. You can add content, forums, quizzes, and so on in the section for each week. This format is bestsuited if you want all your students to work on the same materials at the same time, this would be a good format to choose.

To set the course format:
- Click "Edit Settings" under the course administration tree in the Administration block.
- Select the course format from the drop-down list under the Course Format Section which
- is collapsed by default.
- Enter the parameters for your course:
- For the weekly format, set the start date and the number of weeks.
- For the topic format, set the number of topics.

- For the social format, set the course start date. You don't need to worry about the number of weeks or topics.
- For the Single activity format choose the type of the activity which you wish to use.

2.5   Enrolling Students in the Course

To select the Enrollment options for your course, click and expand the Users tree under the course administration tree in the Administration Block. Then, click on "Enrolled users". It will show the list of the participants enrolled in your course including their details like First Name, Surname, Email address, Last access, Assigned Roles within the course, and the Enrollment method as shown in Figure 2.5.

To enroll users to your course:
- Click "Enroll users" in the top right side as shown in the image.
- In the pop up window, first choose the role to be assigned from the drop down menu.
- Let's say that you want to assign Student role to your users.
- To limit the Enrollment duration for some specified time, expand the Enrollment tree and set the Enrollment duration.
- Click on the Names of the users to Enroll them as a Student in your course.
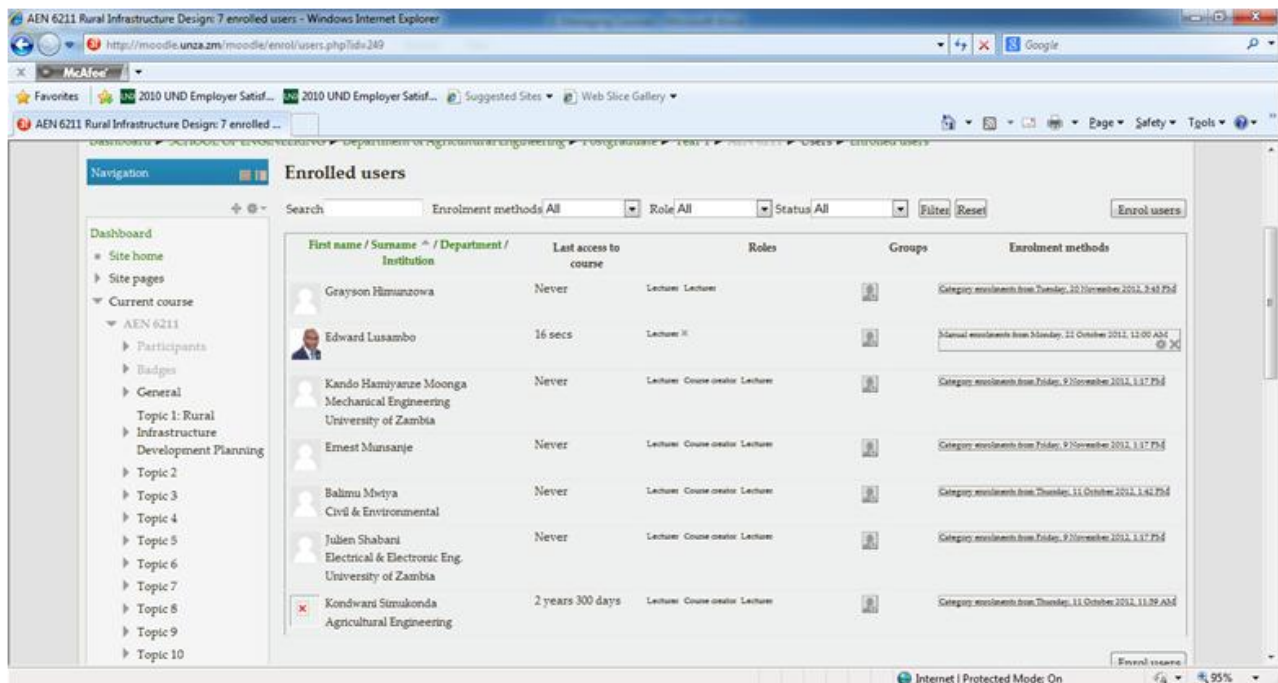- After finishing click "Finish enrolling users".

Figure 2.5 Enrolled users page

2.6   Assigning Roles

A role is a collection of per missions defined for the whole system that you can assign to specific users in specific contexts. The combination of roles and context define a specific user's ability to do something on any page.

The roles and permissions system in Moodle provides you with a huge amount of flexibility for managing how students and other people interact with your course. The roles system supports guest, student, non-editing teacher, editing teacher, course creator, and administrator roles out of the box; it also allows you to create and customize roles, and to change what a given role can do in each activity.

Most of the time, students will enroll themselves or be added automatically by your university's enrollment system, so there shouldn't be much need for you to manually enroll students. However, if you need to add a teaching assistant, an outside guest, or a student who is having a problem with financial aid, you must manually enroll them, i.e., assign them a role in your Moodle course.

By default, teachers are only allowed to assign the roles of non-editing teacher, student, and guest. If you want to assign the role of teacher, you will need to ask the system administrator for this to be allowed.

To assign a user the role of student:

- Click Course Administration> Users> Enrolled Users in the administration block.
- It will display all of the enrolled users in your course.
- Click "Enroll users" in the top right side as shown in the image.
    - (i) In the pop up window, first choose the role to be assigned from the drop down menu. Let's say that you want to assign Student role to your users.
    - (ii) To limit the Enrollment duration for some specified time, expand the Enrollment tree and set the Enrollment duration and starting date.
    - (iii) Click on the Names of the users to Enroll them as a Student in your course.
    - (iv) After enrolling the students click "Finish enrolling users".
    - (v) Students will have access to your course as soon as you assign them a role. They won't need to have an enrollment key or to confirm the enrollment.

2.7   Removing and Temporarily Suspending a User Account

2.7.1   Removing an account

If a student is deregistered from your class, you'll want to remove the student from your Moodle course as well. Leaving a student enrolled in your Moodle course when she is not on the official roster makes grading and class management much more difficult. When you record grades or look for student assignments, extra students on the roll gets confusing. The nonparticipating student will also have access to your discussion boards and other potentially sensitive information.

Fortunately, removing students is easy. Simply click the "*delete*" icon besides the Enrollment method column in the extreme right on the Enrolled Users page of your course.

2.7.2   Temporarily Suspending a User Account

There may be times when you are not sure about the status of the students and you want to disable them for a while before removing them completely from your course. You may suspend the user from the course.

To suspend a user from the course:
- Click the icon in the Enrollment method column against the Students name that you want to suspend.
- Under the Status drop down menu change the status from "Active" to"Suspended".

2.8   Reports

Once your course is up and students are working, Moodle provides you with detailed logs and participation reports of student activity.

The logs and participation reports are useful for tracking students' activity in a course. If a student does not spend time with the material, he will have difficulty succeeding in the course. Frequently, students who do not do well simply have not spent the time working with the course material.

If you analyse your course reports on a regular basis, you can monitor when your students engage with the course material. Logs and participation reports can also tell you which resources and activities students find most valuable.

To access course reports:
- Click Reports in the Administration block.
- On the Reports page, choose ***Logs***

Select any combination of group, student, date, activity, and actions, then click the "***Get these logs***" button. You can see what pages the students accessed, the time and date they accessed it, the IP address they came from, and a description of their actions (view, add, update, delete), as shown in Figure 2.6. You can choose to display the logs on a page or download them in text or Excel format.

The Logs page contains active links enabling you to access the student's profile page or a particular page that the student was viewing. The IP address link provides an estimate of the student's location.

Figure 2.6 Reports page

2.9   Backing up and Restoring a Course

2.9.1   Backing up a Course

After spending a lot of time setting up your course and delivering it to your students, you would want to make sure you do not lose your work. Fortunately, Moodle gives you a backup tool to create archives of your courses. Backups can also be used to copy course resources and activities from one course to another. A course can be saved with some or all of its parts by using the course backup. Typically, the site administrator will set a schedule of automated course backups for the whole site. A teacher with editing privileges can create a backup or download an existing backup for safe keeping, or for use on another Moodle site.

To backup a course:
- Go to Administration> Course administration> Backup
- Initial settings - Select activities, blocks, filters and other items as required then click the Next button. Users with appropriate permissions, such as administrators and managers, can choose whether to include users, anonymize user information, or include user role assignments, user files, comments, user completion details, course logs and grade history in the backup.
- Schema settings - Select/deselect specific items to include in backup, then click the Next button.
- Select specific types of activity to be backed up by clicking the link 'Show type options'.
- Confirmation and review - Check that everything is as required, using the Previous button if necessary, otherwise click the 'Perform backup' button
- Complete - Click the Continue button

A backup file (with distinctive *.mbz* extension is then saved in the course backup area. Backup file names are of the form *backup-moodle2-course-coursename-date-hour.mbz*, ending in -nu.mbz when backed up with no users and -an.mbz with anonymised names. Anonymise user information is a backup feature which "protects user identities" by making each user anonymous.

2.9.2   Restoring a Course

A course backup file (.mbz) may be restored from within any existing course for which you have permission. During the restore process, you will be given the option to restore as a new course or into an existing course.

To restore a course:
- Go to Administration> Front page settings> Restore (if you have front page permissions) or Administration> Course administration> Restore (if you have an empty course to restore into.)
- Upload the backup file or choose a file in the course backup area or user private backup area and click Restore
- Confirm - Check that everything is as required then click the Continue button Destination - Choose whether the course should be restored as a new course or into an existing course then click the Continue button.
- Settings - Select activities, blocks, filters and other items as required then click the Next button
- Schema - Selectldeselect specific items and amend the course name, short name and start date if necessary then click the Next button
- Review - Check that everything is as required, using the Previous button if necessary, then click the 'Perform restore' button
- Complete - Click the continue button