The "local metadata" plugin has been created to allow extra, "metadata" to be defined and assigned to various context level elements in Moodle. It is an abstraction of the current "user profile field" functionality in Moodle and contains much of the same code.

The data model includes context level identifiers to allow the same data tables and API's to be used for all of the different context levels. The plugin has been designed with the ability to be adopted into core, and completely replace the current user profile field feature if desired.
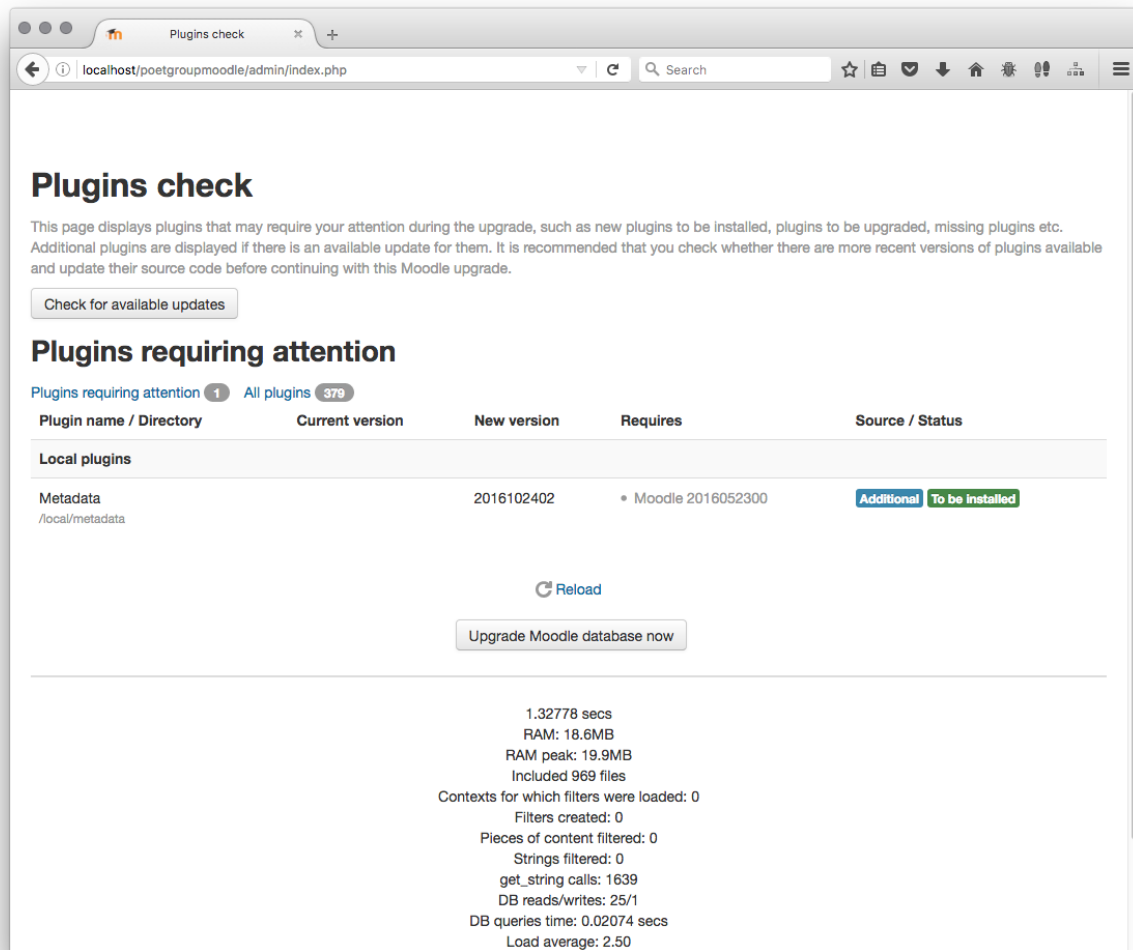
In its current concept state, the plugin provides metadata functionality for users, courses and activity modules. Other context levels can be added reasonably easily (e.g. categories, blocks). Note, that the user metadata provided by the plugin is "in addition to" the current profile data rather than replacing it. For now, it is really intended to show/prove that this could replace the user profile data feature.

Since it is a plugin, it can only provide interfaces that are available to plugins. For example, adding specific data to defined course metadata elements must be done through a different interface form than the main course settings form. The plugin takes advantages of Moodle hooks and callbacks that allow screens and menus to be added to, where they exist. If brought into core, these would be able to be more tightly integrated (this could also be better integrated if/when the proposed "hook" system provides more hooking points).

The plugin can be retrieved from https://github.com/POETGroup/moodle-local_metadata. It should be installed into the Moodle "/local/metadata/" directory (the "metadata" subdirectory needs to be created). Make sure that the "/local/metadata/" directory contains the root of the plugin.

Following is a walkthrough of the plugin in its current state:

Installation

The plugin will install on 3.1 and the new 3.2 versions of Moodle.

Settings

The main settings allow the site to select what context levels metadata can be used for. Currently this allows users, courses, and activity modules. Enabling one, enables the data management interfaces for the corresponding context level. This setting screen can be accessed from the local plugin settings menu in the main administration navigation.

Local plugin navigation
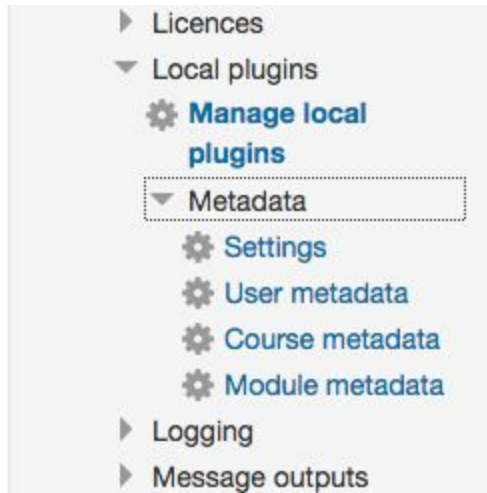
In the site administration menu, under "Plugins / Local plugins" you'll find the settings interface (previous), as well as interfaces to define data fields for the various contexts. These data field interfaces can also be accessed from the main site admin sections for the specific context levels (where the exist).
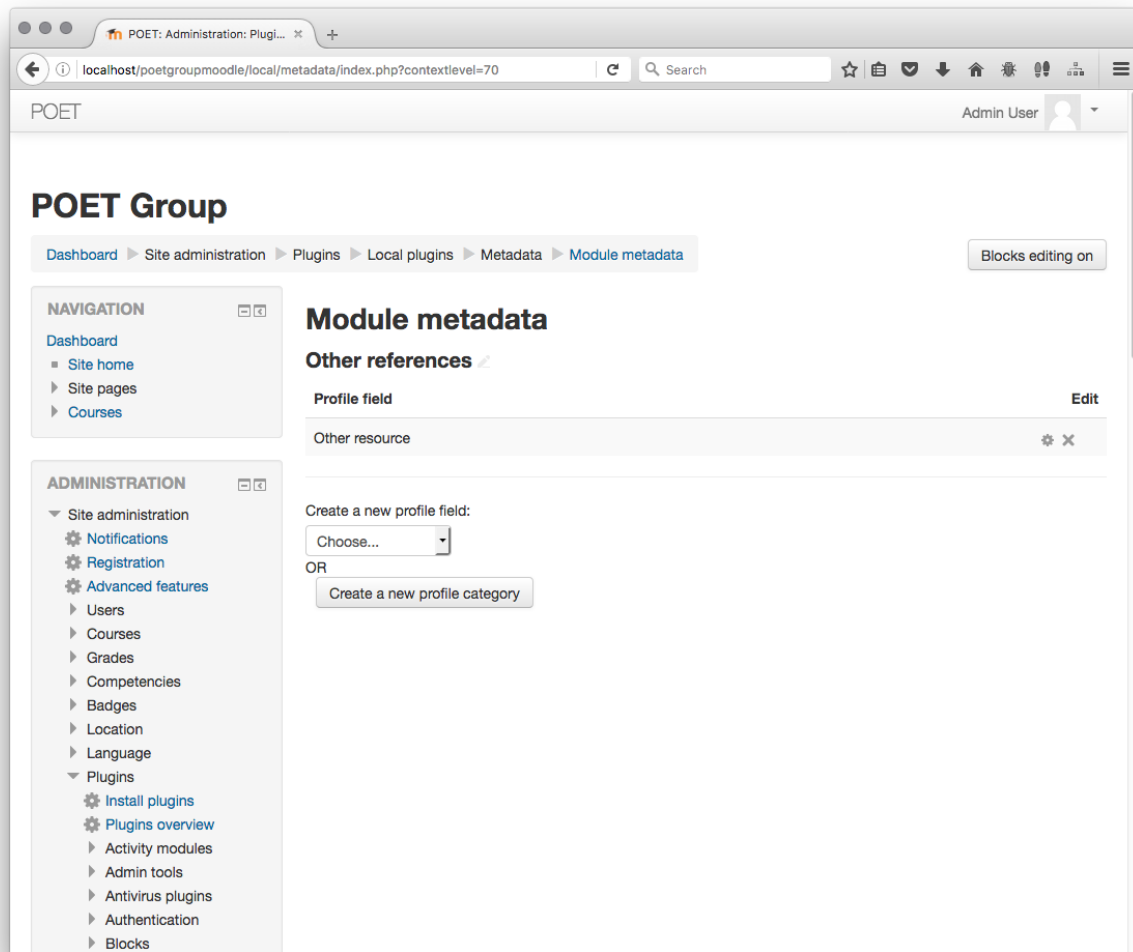
User metadata
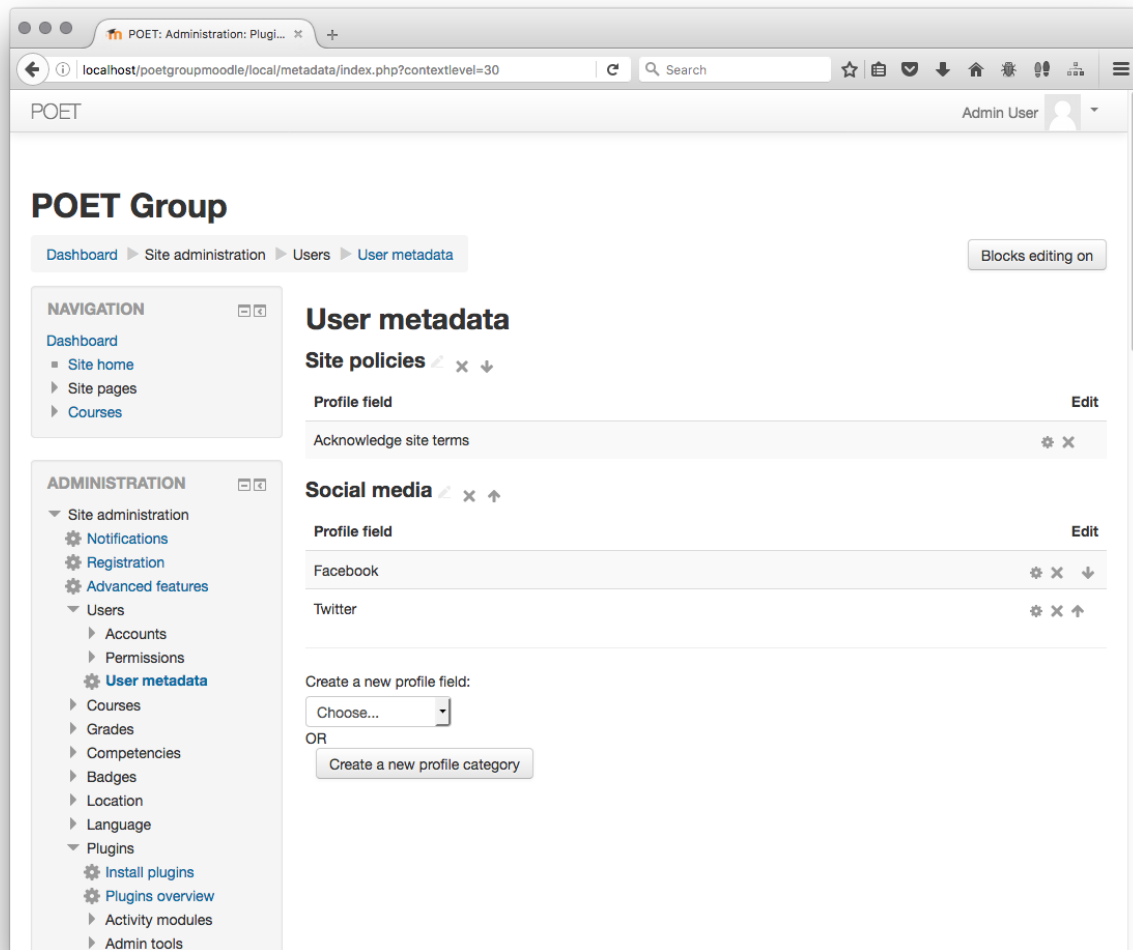
The "User metadata" screen can be accessed from the plugins menu (previous) or from the user administration menu (as shown above). The user admin menu option will only appear if the metadata for users is enabled in the plugin settings. Adding fields and categories works the same as the current user profile functions. Some of the functionality has been updated to use newer editing features of Moodle (for example, in line editing of category text).

Course metadata
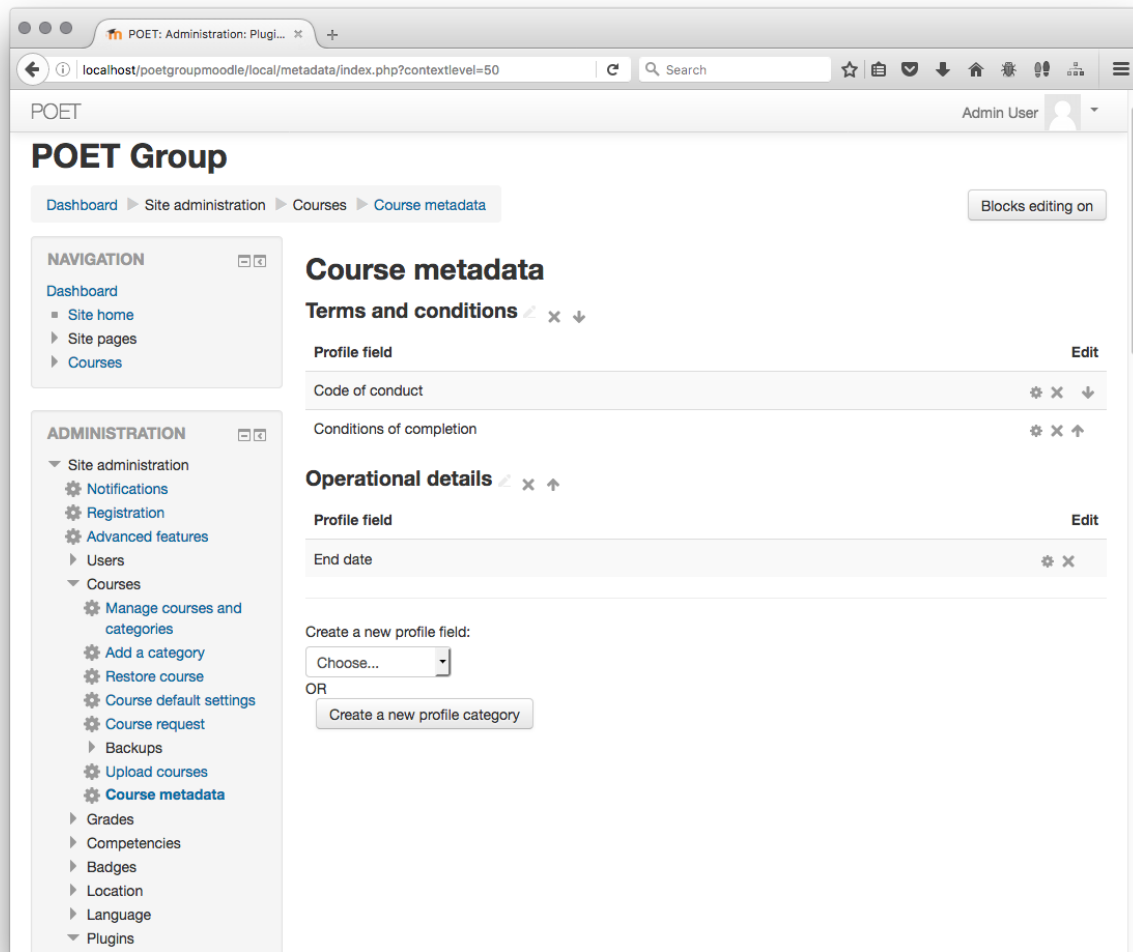
The "Course metadata" screen can be accessed from the plugins menu (previous) or from the course administration menu (as shown above). The course admin menu option will only appear if the metadata for courses is enabled in the plugin settings. Adding fields and categories works the same as the current user profile functions.
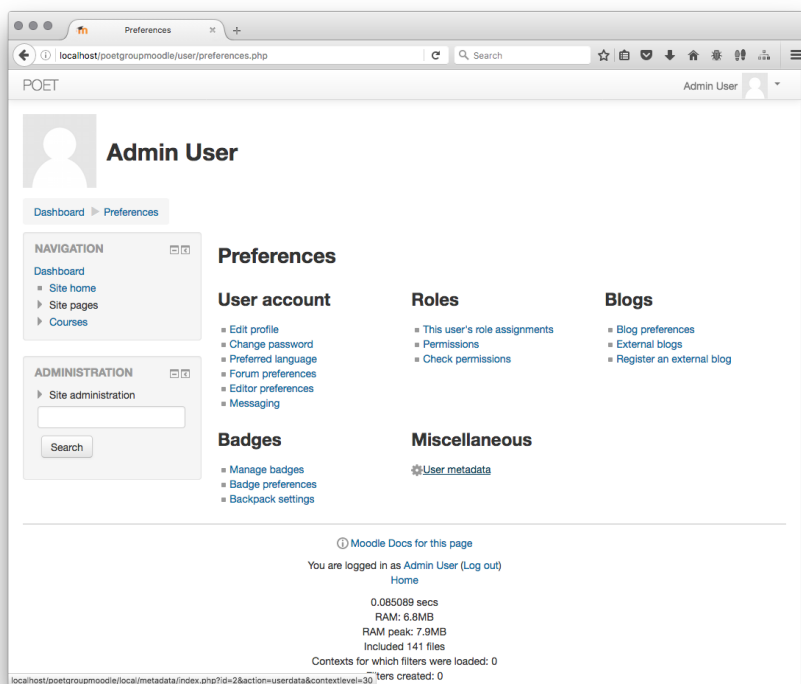
Module metadata

The "Module metadata" screen can only be accessed from the metadata plugins menu. Adding fields and categories works the same as the current user profile functions.

User data management
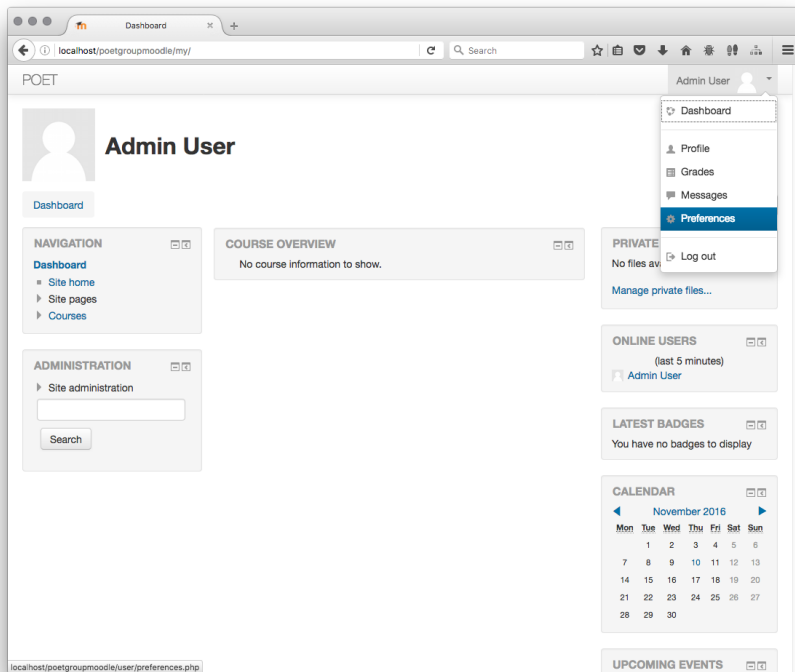
To add metadata to a specific user, access the "Preferences" screen.

From there, specific entries can be made for any user.
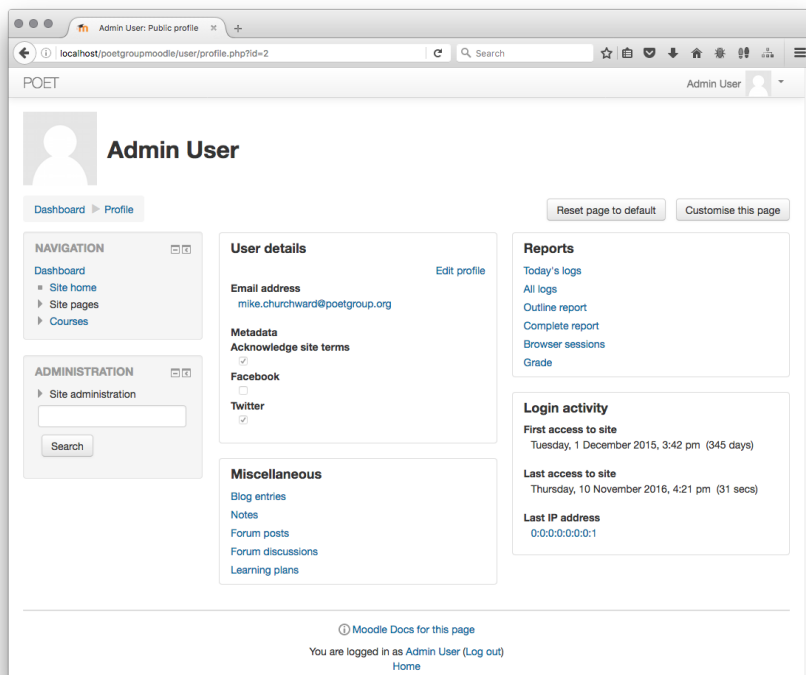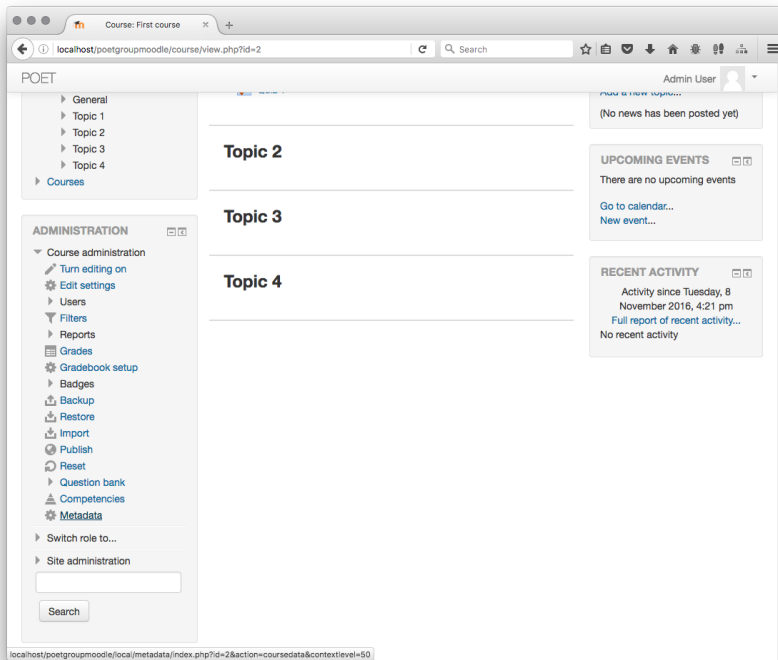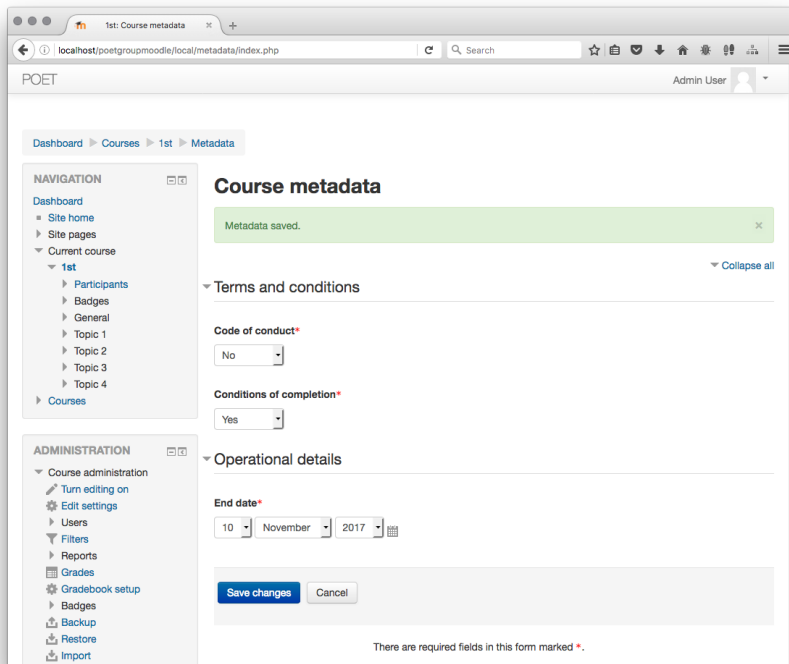
User profile

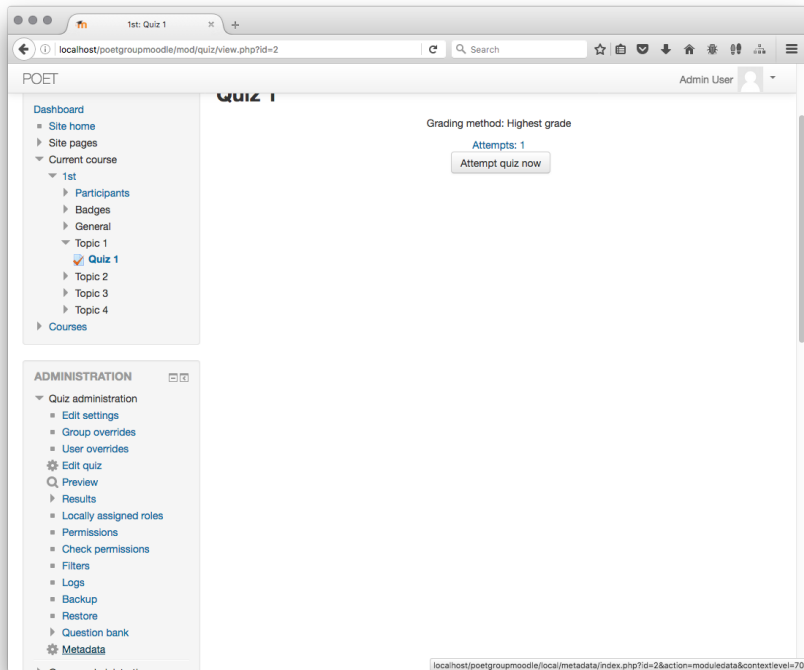The user metadata for any user can be seen on the user profile screen.

Course data management

To add metadata to a course (if course metadata has been enabled), access the "Metadata" link in the course administration menu for the course.

Module data management

To add metadata to an activity module (if module metadata has been enabled), access the "Metadata" link in the specific activity's administration menu.