FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I get started?

The first thing to do it to read the User Guide from beginning to end – it will set the context, and describe the steps that you will need to take. You should also browse through any classes and assignments that you have "guest" access to, so that you can explore the interface.

Your first assignment:
We suggest that you create your first assignment within your TEST class first: this class already has some fictitious students enrolled in it. Select your TEST class, and create an assignment within it (CREATE ASSIGNMENT). You will be prompted for the following information:

- the date by which all students should submit their assignment;
- the date by which all students should have completed their reviews;
- instructions to the students regarding their submission;
- the submission requirements: that is, what files you expect the students to submit. You can also specify that the students should use the Aropa editor for their submission.
  (Aside: If you plan to go through the whole submission and review process as part of your test procedure, it is a good idea to specify this Aropa editor option – you will need to pretend to be some students, and pretend to submit on their behalf, and entering text into the editor will be easier than loading files).

Once you have saved these details, you then need to specify the rubric (EDIT RUBRIC). It is a good idea to first look at the drop-down list of rubrics to see if there is anything similar to what you want, and then to load it and edit it. Otherwise, you can create a new rubric from scratch. The Appendix to the User Guide describes how to create rubrics.

The allocation parameters need to be specified next (SPECIFY ALLOCATIONS). Most assignments use the 'Normal' method of allocation, and this is a good place to start.

You then need to activate the assignment (press the Big Red Button). If you wish to follow the whole process of the test assignment through, you can impersonate the fictitious students and submit assignments on their behalf. If you then change the submission deadline to a date in the past, review allocations will be created and you can see how student assignments are allocated to peers (MONITOR REVIEWING).

Your first class:

When you create a new class (ADD A NEW CLASS), you will be prompted for a class name and an access code. It is a good idea to name the class after the course you are teaching, together with its year (and semester if appropriate) – for example, Anatomy1-S1-2015.

The access code is the temporary password you should give to students in the class; those students who have not used Aropa before will be able to get into the system with this access code (after which they will be prompted to set their own password).

You then need to enter the students into the class (EDIT CLASS LIST), one student id per line. This is usually done by a cut-an-paste from an institutional class list.

You are now ready to create assignments within your new class!

2. I used Aropa successfully last year, and what to do the same this year. What do I do?

Since each Aropa class is associated with a set of students, and a new year typically means a new cohort, a new class needs to be created for each new year (Add a New Class). You can then specify the new student ids for the new class (Edit Class Details).

You will need to re-create the assignments (with new submission and review dates), but you do not have to create the rubric again – you can load the rubric from the previous year. You can also cut-and-paste the instructions from the previous assignment to the new one.

3. Do I have to input a list of the ids of all the students in the class?

Yes, but this does not usually have to be done by hand. There needs to be one student id per row. Usually, you will be able to cut-and-paste from a class list (perhaps an Excel spreadsheet, or a class list on Moodle) as provided by your institution.

4. I want to mark the assignments myself, or allow tutors to mark them. Is this possible?

Under 'Edit Class List', you can insert non-student ids with the 'marker' role at the bottom. If an instructor wishes to have a dual role (as both instructor and marker), then a new id would need to be created for the instructor: thus, if the instructor for a class is 'jen21', then a marker called 'jen21-marker' would need to specified in the class list, with a marker role. Tutors can also be specified as markers. You can then set the passwords for these markers using 'Edit User Details', and then, when they login with their marker id, they will be directed to the markers' view of the system (which is different to the instructors' view).

If there are markers in a class, then they will be listed when you specify the review allocations ('Specify Allocations'), and there will be options for you to include markers in the reviewing process.

5. I have set my submission deadline, but want to give a student an extended deadline? Can I do this?

Yes, there is a facility for giving submission extensions (MANAGE EXTENSIONS). If you give a student an extension before the submission deadline has passed, then that student will be included in the review allocation as normal, with a 'placeholder' indicating that a submission is still expected. Once the submission deadline has passed, students who are allocated this student's work to review will be told that they will need to wait until it has been submitted.

6. The submission deadline has passed, and a student has missed this deadline for legitimate reasons. Can I give an extension after the deadline has passed? If I do so, how will this affect the review allocations?

Yes, there is a facility for giving submission extensions (MANAGE EXTENSIONS), which works even after the submission deadline has passed. At the submission deadline, author-review allocation pairs will be created, If a student is given an extension after the allocations have been created, then the allocations need to be changed, so as to take this anticipated submission into account.

However, when it makes changes to the review allocations, what it can't do is change an allocation for which the review has already been done; it also does not change allocations where the reviewer has already read the document - this is, of course, to ensure that students who have started their reviewing early do not find that they are suddenly given new documents to review!

Of course, the longer the period between the allocations being made and the time at which they are changed, the more difficult it is for Aropa to allocate all the submissions to review, as more students would have started their reviews. For this reason, it is advisable to keep extension periods as short as possible.

7. I would like students to be able to comment on the quality of the reviews that they received. Can I do this?

Yes, you can create a 'Review Marking' assignment that allows reviews to be marked – this is an option under the 'Save' button on the EDIT ASSIGMENT page. If you select this option (Reviews will be marked using a separate Review Marking assignment), then you will get a new button on the assignment page (CREATE REVIEW MARKING) which will allow you to create a new assignment which will use the reviews as submissions which can themselves be reviewed.

Like an ordinary assignment, the rubric and the allocation parameters need to be set before this review assignment is activated. If you want the students to only comment on the reviews that they themselves received (that is, rather like a 'response to reviewers' comments), then there is an option to say that they will only mark reviews of their own work.

8. I would like to be able to give students marks for the quality of the reviews that they have written. Is this possible?

Yes, you can do this by creating a 'review marking' assignment (as above), and using your marker id to mark the reviews. SPECIFY ALLOCATIONS will allow you to indicate that you (and/or tutors) will be marking the reviews (with the 'randomly allocated reviews' method). When marking the reviews, the original submission is also available, so you would be able to comment on the appropriateness of the review.

9. Can I download submissions and/or reviews from Aropa to my own computer?

DOWNLOAD SUBMISSIONS downloads all the submissions into a zipped folder, which contains a folder for each student. In each student's folder is the submission, as well as a word document containing all the reviews on that submission.

10. Will the title of a file submitted by a student through Aropa be seen by the reviewers?

Yes. When a reviewer saves an author's file, it will save it under that name that the author gave it - this is a feature of the standard 'save file' dialog. Aropa cannot change the name of a file.
For this reason, it is a good idea to advise students to not put any personal identifying information in the file or in the file name. Some students, however, simply ignore this advice and put their names or student numbers in the file name, or even at the top of their submission document. Aropa has no way of being able to detect this – and so Aropa itself cannot guarantee anonymity, since it has no control over the naming or content of the files.
If this is of concern, one way to deal with this is to have the submissions entered by students using the Aropa editor - this, however, is only really any good for essays or other reports that don't require diagrams: it supports only simple formatting.

11. What happens if a student drops out of a course during an assignment?

It is rare for a student to drop out of a course after having submitted a piece of work: if they are going to drop out, they usually do so before they have to submit anything.
These are the scenarios:

- Student drops out, and does not submit anything. Usually, you would select the option that says that reviewers are 'those who submit' (rather than 'everyone in the class'), and so this student would be ignored when author-reviewer allocations are automatically created. The submission will still be there, but the student will not be reviewed, and the drop-out-student will not be allocated any of their peers' work to review. It is as if the student does not exist for the purposes of this assignment.
- Student submits work, and then drops out before the end of the review period. This means that allocation records will be automatically made for this student, so:

- Reviewers will be asked to assess the drop-out-student's submission (no harm done, even if the drop-out-student never accesses the reviews of his/her work).
- In addition, the drop-out-student will be allocated other students' work to review. This is more problematic, since this means that some other students will not get their full set of reviews – this situation is the same as when some reviewer students do not bother to do their reviews (yes, this happens, and is unavoidable). Aropa does not know whether a student who has not done a review has dropped-out or simply being lazy (and, in many cases, neither does the lecturer.)
- In the rare case where you know that a student has dropped out after the submission date but before the end of the review date and you want to ensure that the peers will not miss out on getting a full set of reviews, you can adjust the allocations manually, replacing the drop-out-student's id with another student's id when it is indicated as a reviewer. This may mean that some students will then get allocated more reviews than they were originally meant to do.

12. How do I delete an assignment?

It is possible to delete an assignment, but you should think carefully before doing so – especially if it contains student submissions and/or student reviews: students may want to go back to look at their reviews any time in the future. An assignment is usually only deleted if it is a test assignment, or if something went horribly wrong, and it had to be aborted. You need to 'deactivate' the assignment, and then a 'Delete Assignment' button will appear. You will be prompted as to whether you wish to delete everything (that is, the entire assignment), or just purge the submissions.

13. How do I delete a class?

It is not possible to delete a class. You can, however, easily rename it (Edit Class Details).