Discussion Board

The discussion board allows students and instructors to participate in threaded class discussions in an “asynchronous” environment - participants do not need to be online at the same time to participate. There is a ‘post first’ option that instructors can select which requires students to post to the board before they are able to read what others’ have posted.

Discussions are organized into forums, which function as topics. Within each forum are threads, which consist of an initial post and the series of replies to that post. Students do not have permission to create forums – this must be done by instructors. Students can then create and respond to threads within a forum.

Adding a discussion board to a site:

1. Once inside your course, make sure Edit Mode (upper right corner) has been turned ‘On.’

   Edit Mode is: ON

1. Click the ‘plus sign’ at the top of the course menu and select ‘Tool Link.’
2. Give the discussions area a name and choose ‘Discussion Board’ for the tool type. Check the box to make it available to users and click Submit.

2. Once added to the course menu, click on the link to begin using the discussion board.
Adding a forum to the discussion board:

1. Navigate to your discussion board and click the ‘Create Forum’ button in the upper left.

2. Fill in the information about the forum:

   Step 1: Give the forum a name and use the textbox to add a description, if desired.

   **1. Forum Information**
   
   ![Forum Information](image)

   Step 2: Make the forum available to students or not, and set date and time restrictions if desired.

   **2. Forum Availability**
   
   ![Forum Availability](image)

   Step 3: Choose settings for the forum (see “Forum Settings at a Glance” at the end of this document for more detail) and click Submit.
3. **Forum Settings**

*If a Due Date is set, submissions are accepted after this date, but are marked late.*

**Viewing Threads/Replies**
- Standard View
- Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.
*If participants are required to create threads in order to view other threads in the forum, or edit their own posts, and cannot post anonymously. Those options will be set for you.*

**Grade**
- No Grading in Forum
- Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible: 
- Grade Threads

**Subscribe**
- Do not allow subscriptions
- Allow members to subscribe to threads
- Allow members to subscribe to forum
  - Include body of post in the email
  - Include link to post

**Create and Edit**
- Allow Anonymous Posts
- Allow Author to Delete Own Posts
  - All posts
  - Only posts with no replies
- Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts
- Allow Members to Create New Threads
- Allow File Attachments
- Allow Users to Reply with Quote
- Force Moderation of Posts

**Additional Options**
- Allow Post Tagging
- Allow Members to Rate Posts

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3. The new forum should now be added to the forum list. Click the forum link to access threads.
Adding a thread to a forum:

1. Navigate to your discussion board and click on a forum from the forum list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome!</td>
<td>Please use this forum to ask any general questions you have about the course. Feel free to comment and respond on your colleagues' postings. Good luck this semester!</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings Discussion</td>
<td>Please use this forum to discuss the weekly reading material.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Cafe</td>
<td>Please use this forum to discuss...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Topics</td>
<td>Use this space to discuss ideas for the final project.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Click the ‘Create Thread’ button in the upper left.

3. Fill in the information about the thread:

   Step 1: Fill in the subject and enter the message in the text box.
2. **Message**

   - **Subject**: Some ideas for inspiration...

   Here are some ideas that you may choose from, or that may inspire you:
   1. DEVELOPMENT OF AN AUTO-SUMMARIZATION TOOL
   2. DEVELOPMENT OF A FEATURE-RICH, RESUME BUILDER APPLICATION
   3. DEVELOPMENT OF A CAMPAIGN INFORMATION SYSTEM
   4. DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (RMS)
   5. DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICAL ONLINE TICKETS RESERVATION SYSTEM FOR MOVIE THEATRES

Step 2: Attach a file if desired, and click Submit when ready to post.

3. **Attachments**

   - **Attach File**: [Browse My Computer](#), [Browse Content Collection](#)

4. **Submit**

   Click **Save** to save a draft of this message. Click **Submit** to submit the post. Click **Cancel** to quit.

   - **Cancel**
   - **Save Draft**
   - **Submit**

4. The new thread should now be added to the list of threads. Click on the thread to read or reply to it.

   - **Forum: Project Topics**
     
     Organize Forum Threads on this page and apply settings to several or all threads. Threads are listed in a tabular format. The Threads can be sorted by clicking the column title or the caret at the top of each column. More Help.

   - **Create Thread**
   - **Subscribe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thread Actions</th>
<th>Collect</th>
<th>Delete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   - **5/8/13 12:12 PM**
     - **Some Ideas for Inspiration...**
     - **Amy Brusini**
     - **Published**
     - **0**
     - **1**

   **Replying to a thread:**

   1. Navigate to the desired thread within a forum and click on it to expand the thread.
2. The original thread (“Some ideas for inspiration”) and all of its reply messages are displayed in an expanded format. To collapse any of the individual messages, push the mouse towards the top of the message box until the ‘Collapse’ icon appears. Click the mouse and the message will collapse. Hover in the same area to see the ‘Expand’ icon and click to expand.

To collapse or expand all messages at once, use the buttons at the top of the thread.

3. To reply to a message, hover inside the message box and click ‘Reply.’ (Note: ‘Quote’ will include a copy of the existing message in the reply, ‘Edit’ allows you to edit the message, and ‘Delete’ will delete the message.)

There is also the option to send a private email to the author of any post.
4. Fill in the information about the reply:

   Step 1: Edit the subject line if needed and enter the reply in the text box.

   Step 2: Attach a file if desired, and click Submit when ready to post.

5. The reply is now posted.
Forum Options

Use the edit dropdown next to the forum name to expand its options.

Open – open the forum
Edit – modify the forum settings
Manage – modify a participant’s role in the forum (moderator, participant, grader, etc.)
Copy – copy the forum or forum settings to another discussion board in the course site
Delete – delete the forum
Thread Options

Use the edit dropdown next to the thread name to expand its options.

Open – open the thread
Mark as Read/Unread - mark thread as read or unread
Set Flag/Clear Flag – set or clear a flag on a thread
Hide - make a locked thread invisible to users
Make Unavailable - make a thread hidden and inaccessible to all users except forum managers
Lock – make a thread read-only; users may not post to a locked thread
Unlock - make a thread read-write; users may read and post to unlocked threads
Collect - select one or more posts or threads to be included in a page that can be sorted, filtered, printed, and saved as a document
Delete – delete the thread
Viewing threads using the ‘Collect’ option

The ‘Collect’ option is a feature which allows you to easily select and view multiple threads/posts at once. They can then be sorted and printed, if desired.

1. Navigate to a particular forum within the discussion board. Click to open the forum.

2. Select the threads that you wish to view using the checkboxes on the left and click the ‘Collect’ button at the top.

3. All threads that you have selected and all posts within them will be displayed for easy viewing. Use the ‘Sort by’ and ‘Ordering’ dropdowns to sort the results. Use the ‘Filter’ button to filter results more precisely. ‘Print Preview’ can be used to view and print collected threads.
4. The Collect option is also available within individual threads. Navigate to a desired thread within a forum. Select the posts you wish to view and click the ‘Message Actions’ dropdown and choose ‘Collect.’
Grading Discussion Board Posts

Making a Forum ‘Gradable’ and Grading a Forum:

1. When creating a forum, select ‘Grade Discussion Forum’ from the settings and enter in the points possible. Also decide if and how often you want participants in this forum to be included in the ‘needs grading’ status of the Grade Center. For example, if the option is selected and the number of posts is set to 1, the ‘needs grading’ status will appear each time a participant posts. If the number of posts is set to 5, the ‘needs grading’ status will appear only after a participant has posted five times.

   **Note:** If the forum has already been created, and you’d like to change it to a graded forum, click the edit dropdown to the right of the forum name and choose ‘Edit’ to edit the settings. Click Submit.

2. Once the forum has been created and you are ready to grade it, select it from the list of forums.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Please use this forum to ask any general questions you have about the course. Feel free to comment and respond on your colleagues’ postings. Good luck this semester!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings Discussion</td>
<td>Please use this forum to discuss the weekly reading material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Cafe</td>
<td>Please use this forum to discuss...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Topics</td>
<td>Use this space to discuss ideas for the final project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Click the ‘Grade Discussion Forum’ button at the top.

4. Locate the student you wish to grade and select the corresponding ‘Grade’ button for that student.

5. The list of posts made by this particular student appears. Enter the grade, any feedback to the student (optional), and any grading notes for yourself (optional.) Click Submit to save the grade.

Click ‘Forum Statistics’ to expand a display of participation statistics by this particular student.
6. The grade is automatically entered into the Grade Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Project Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test1</td>
<td>test1_student</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test2</td>
<td>test2_student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test3</td>
<td>test3_student</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The ‘Grade Forum’ feature allows you to add/edit a grade for the forum as a whole – not for each individual entry. (I.e. Blackboard creates **one column** in the grade center for the forum – not multiple columns for each post.) If you want to enter a separate grade for each post, you will need to manually create your own columns in the grade center.

**Making a Thread ‘Gradable’ and Grading the Thread:**

7. When creating a forum, select ‘Grade Threads’ from the settings.  
**Note:** When this setting is selected, students are not allowed to create new threads – the instructor must create all new threads. Blackboard displays a message letting you know that this setting has been set for you (in blue).

8. Once the forum has been created, the instructor has to create the first thread so that students can participate. Follow the steps for “Adding a Thread to a Forum.” Before clicking Submit, there will be additional options in the Grading section:
   - Check the box to grade the thread and enter in the points possible.
   - Decide if and how often you want participants in this thread to be included in the ‘needs grading’ status of the Grade Center. For example, if the option is selected and the number of posts is set to 1, the ‘needs grading’ status will appear each time a participant posts. If the number of posts is set to 5, the ‘needs grading’ status will appear only after a participant has posted five times.
   - Enter a due date, if desired. If a student posts after the due date, it will be marked late.
   - Add a rubric if desired.
   - Click Submit.
9. When you are ready to grade the thread, click the ‘Grade Thread’ button in the last column of the list of threads:

10. Locate the student you wish to grade and select the corresponding ‘Grade’ button for that student.

11. The list of posts made by this particular student appears. Enter the grade, any feedback to the student (optional), and any grading notes for yourself (optional.) Click Submit to save the grade.
12. The grade is automatically entered into the Grade Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Week 1 Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test1</td>
<td>test1_student</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test2</td>
<td>test2_student</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test3</td>
<td>test3_student</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The ‘Grade Threads’ feature allows you to add/edit a grade for the thread as a whole – not for each individual entry. (I.e. Blackboard creates one column in the grade center for the thread – not multiple columns for each post.) If you want to enter a separate grade for each post, you will need to manually create your own columns in the grade center.
## Forum Settings at a Glance

When creating a new forum, an instructor has several settings to choose from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting:</th>
<th>Description:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard View</td>
<td>All threads visible all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.</td>
<td>Prevents students from viewing/copying other students’ responses to the thread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Grading in Forum</td>
<td>Members will not be graded for individual contributions to the Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Forum</td>
<td>Enables grading at the Forum level. A column in the Grade Center is created for the Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Threads</td>
<td>Enables grading at the Thread level. A column in the Grade Center is created for the Thread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not allow subscriptions</td>
<td>No subscriptions for this Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow members to subscribe to Threads</td>
<td>Allows subscription to threads only. When a new message in a thread is posted, members who are subscribed receive an email notice that a new message is posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow members to subscribe to Forum</td>
<td>Allows subscription to the entire Forum. When a new message or thread is posted, members who are subscribed receive an email notice that new material is posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Anonymous Posts</td>
<td>Posts can be submitted anonymously. Anonymous posts cannot be graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Author to Delete Own Posts</td>
<td>Users can delete all their own posts, or just posts with no replies. Deleted posts cannot be recovered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Author to Edit their Own Published Posts</td>
<td>Users can edit their published posts – no record of the original post is saved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Members to Create New Threads</td>
<td>Members are permitted to create new threads in the Forum. This setting cannot be used when threads are graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow File Attachments</td>
<td>Messages within the Forum are allowed to contain file attachments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Users to Reply with Quote</td>
<td>Users can include the text of the original message in any replies to that message. This is enabled by default.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Moderation of Posts</td>
<td>Requires that all messages are reviewed and approved or rejected by a moderator. Messages that are approved are posted and messages that are rejected are returned to the author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow Members to Rate Posts</td>
<td>Posts can be rated using a five star system to encourage quality posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show participants in ‘Needs Grading’ status (option appears if grading a forum)</td>
<td>If selected, participant names will display in the ‘Needs Grading’ status inside the Grade Center.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>