

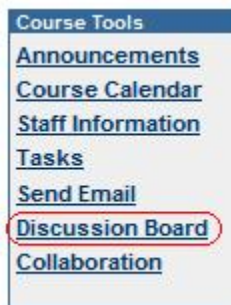
The Discussion Board

Online communication is growing in popularity both in terms of course work and also social networking. One method of online communication through Blackboard is Discussion Boards. Discussion boards enable students who do not engage in public discussion to contribute to the courses and formulate their ideas.

Tip:

The instructor or TA on a course site MUST initiate the forum, students can not. Once a forum is established, students can add comments ('threads') without any interaction from the instructor or TA.

1. Select **Control Panel**
2. Click on the **Discussion Board** link in the Course Tools area.



3. Here you will see the Discussion Board Dashboard which will contain one or more discussion boards.

	Discussion Board	Forums	Participants	Posts
Test Preview Demo		6	3	10
Group 1		0	0	0

- o Main Discussion Board – In your Blackboard course site, by default there is a main discussion board that all students can see.
 - o Group Discussion Board – If you have created groups in your course site (and enabled the group discussion board functionality for a group), additional group discussion boards will be displayed here. Only members of a specific group will be able to view and post to their discussion board, which allows students to communicate in private from other students regarding topics such as group projects etc. Instructors and TAs can always see group discussion board postings.
4. To add a forum to either the main discussion board or a group discussion board, click on the relevant link from the Discussion Board Dashboard above, and click on the **+Forum** button in the top left hand corner of your screen.



5. Type in a **Forum Name** and any explanatory or descriptive text for students.

1 Forum Information

Name

6. In Section 2, you can amend:

- Availability - whether the forum is available or not to students (if this setting is set to No, students will not be able to view or add to the forum).
- Date & Time Restrictions – you can create a Display After or Display Until date for your forum. The Display After date will set Blackboard to automatically make the forum available to students after a specific date. The Display Until date will set Blackboard to automatically make the forum unavailable to students after a specific date.

2 Forum Availability

Available Yes No

Choose date and time restrictions Display After Display Until

Mar 25 2011 11 40 AM

Mar 25 2011 11 40 AM

Tip:

Setting either the Display After or Display Until date will over-ride the Availability Setting above.

7. In Section 3, you can amend various Forum Settings.

3 Forum Settings

Allow **anonymous posts**

Allow **author to remove own posts**

All posts

Only posts with no replies

Allow **author to modify own published posts**

Allow **post tagging**

Allow **users to reply with quote**

Allow **file attachments**

Allow **members to create new 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

Allow **members to rate posts**

Force **moderation of posts**

Grade No grading in forum

Grade **Forum**: Points possible:

Grade **threads**

Some interesting settings include:

- Post Tagging - Tags are labels you can assign to identify the topic of the post. Only instructors can assign tags to forum posts, but students can search by tag name assigned.
- Allow users to reply with quote – Similar to replying to an email, reply with quote will show the original post at the bottom of a student's reply. This can be very helpful if grading a forum, as you will have further context for an individual reply/post.
- Subscribe – This setting allows the optional subscription by a course user to a full forum or a specific thread. Once they 'subscribe' they will either receive a link to the new post in an email or the actual post in the body of the email.
- Allow members to rate posts – students can rate posts upon review of same, i.e. 2 stars for an 'ok' post, 5 stars for an 'excellent' post or one that the student strongly agrees with.



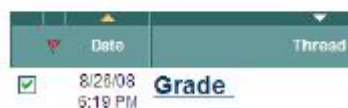
- Force moderation of posts - If you check this option, threads submitted by students will not be made available until you release them.
- Grade – You can choose to grade the overall forum or individual threads.

Adding Tags to Discussion Board Threads

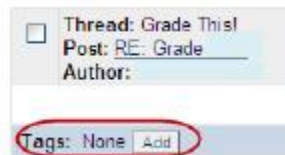
1. Click on the title of a forum, and in the top right hand corner of your page switch to **List View** (if this isn't your default view).



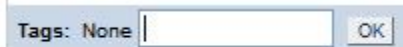
2. When in List View, click on the specific posts you wish to tag and then click on the **Collect** button in the toolbar.



3. Click on the **Add** button next to the Tags label.



4. Enter the desired tag and click **OK** to save your changes.



Tip:

In the student view of this forum, the student will see the tag associated with the thread (but not be able to add new tags) and can use a drop-down menu to view and sort by these tags.

Force moderation of posts

When setting up the forum, click on **Force Moderation of posts** in the forum settings. To moderate a forum:

1. Click on the title of the forum to view new posts.
2. Click on the **Moderate Forum** button in the top toolbar.



3. Posts waiting to be moderated will be displayed for you to read and choose to release to the other users on the course or not.

Grade forums/threads

When setting up the forum, set the **Grade Forum** or **Grade Threads** options in the forum settings.

To grade a forum or thread:

1. Click on the title of the forum to view new posts.
2. Click on the **Grade Forum** button in the top toolbar.



3. If any student has a new post, click **Grade** to the right of a post to view and assign a grade.

Tip:

Once you choose to add grading to a discussion board forum, Blackboard automatically creates a column in the Grade Center to track the grades associated with each student.

Emailing a student about a post

You can create an email reply to a student post which includes the forum thread text by clicking on the **Quote** button at the top of any post when viewing it in the discussion board.

