Create a Discussion Forum

Overview

This tutorial will explain how to create a Discussion Forum. A Discussion Forum is an interactive tool that allows students and instructors to communicate with one another in a virtual environment around a specific topic via nested Discussion Threads, Posts, and Replies.

Quick Steps

Control Panel > Course Tools > Discussion Board > Create Forum > Set Options > Submit

Step 1

To create a Discussion Forum, you must first access the Discussion Board tool. The Discussion Board tool can be found in the Course Management navigation pane beneath the Control Panel section. Click on Course Tools [1], and then click on the “Discussion Board” option [2].
Step 2

From the Discussion Board page, click the Create Forum button [3] on the Action Bar.

Step 3

On the Create Forum page, in the Forum Information section, type the name for your Discussion Forum in the Name field [4]. You can also type instructions or a description in the Description editor [5].

Step 4

In the Forum Availability section, select “Yes” using the first radio button to make the Discussion Forum available to students.
You can create Discussion Forums ahead of time and set the availability to “No” until you are ready to deploy them.

Step 5

Also in the Forum Availability section, check the Display After and Display Until checkboxes to enable date and time restrictions. Display restrictions do not affect the Discussion Forum’s availability, only when it appears.

Step 6

Select Forum Settings based on your specific needs:
In the **Viewing Threads/Replies** row, select the “Standard View” radio button to allow users to see all previously created threads in the forum. You can also select “Participants must create a thread to view other threads in this forum” to require students to make an initial post before they can read their classmates’ posts. This option promotes originality, creativity, and variety.

In the **Grading** row, select “Grade Discussion Forum” to enable grading for the discussion. Then, type a point value in the Points possible box to evaluate participants based on their performance throughout the entire forum. Alternatively, select “Grade Threads” to evaluate participants on their performance in each thread. If you choose to grade threads, you can decide on a thread-by-thread basis whether you want to grade future discussions.

Optionally, check the checkbox for “Show participants in ‘needs grading’ status.” You can then use the drop-down list to select the number of entries required for a student to qualify for a Needs Grading status in the Grade Center.

**Example** - If you choose three posts from the drop-down list and a user submits two posts, the In Progress icon appears in the Grade Center cell and the Discussion Board until the specified number of posts (3) is met. Once met, the Needs Grading icon will appear.

If you check the Grade Thread option and do NOT select the “Needs Grading” checkbox in this section, the Needs Grading icon will not appear in the Grade Center and posts will not appear on the Needs Grading page.

In the **Due Date** row, select a Due Date and Time. Graded posts made after a due date are marked LATE on the Grade Details page in the Grade Center and the Needs Grading page.

In the **Associate Rubrics** row, you can also Associate a Rubric with the Discussion Board.
Step 7

In the **Subscribe** row, select the “Do not allow subscriptions” radio button if you do not want to give students the option of receiving emails when new posts are made. You can select “Allow members to subscribe to threads” to allow students to receive an email alert only when a post is updated or a user posts a reply. Further, you can select “Allow members to subscribe to forum” to allow members the option of receiving emails when new posts are made to the forum. Select either “Include body of the post in the email” or “include link to post” to specify the content shown in those emails.

Step 8

In the **Create and Edit** row, there are various options:

- Allow Anonymous Posts
- Allow Author to Delete Own Posts
- 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
- Allow Post Tagging
- Allow Members to Rate Posts
✓ **Allow Anonymous Posts** becomes unavailable if the forum is graded. For ungraded forums, you can allow anonymous posts to the forum.

✓ **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts** allows authors to delete their own posts if they choose. If you decide to allow author to delete posts, you also have the option to allow the user to delete all posts or only posts with no replies.

✓ **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts** allows authors to edit their own published posts. This is helpful for allowing users to fix spelling or grammar issues after posting.

✓ **Allow Members to Create New Threads** allows forum members to create new threads in the forum, rather than only allowing the instructor to create discussion topics.

✓ **Allow File Attachments** allows files to be attached to messages within the forum.

✓ **Allow Users to Reply with Quote** allow users to include the text of the original message in any replies to that message.

✓ **Force Moderation of Posts** requires that you review all messages before they are published in the forum. *Caution: this can become tedious.*

The **Additional Options** row also offers these options:

✓ **Allow Post Tagging** allow tags (Text Labels) to be added to messages on the forum.

✓ **Allow Members to Rate Posts** allows forum members to rate individual posts.

**Step 9**

When you have finished completing the settings, click the **Submit** button.

![Submit button]

**Note**

The Discussion Forum will appear in alphabetical order on the Discussion Board page. You can sort the Discussion Forums in a few ways by clicking on a column’s title. Options include Forum (title), Description, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Replies to Me, and Total Participants.