

# Discussion Board

## Overview

This section reviews the Discussion Board feature.

## In this section

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<a href="#">Initiate a Thread</a>	Describes how to start a conversation in a Forum.
<a href="#">Respond to a Discussion Board Post</a>	Explains the different methods for posting a reaction to a message.
<a href="#">Grading Discussion Board Participation</a>	Provides steps for assigning a Grade to a Student for Discussion Board participation.
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## About the Discussion Board

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### Overview

The Discussion Board is an outcomes-based learning tool that can be applied in a number of ways to enhance learning and measure performance.

### Discussion Board Terms

The table below outlines the terms used to describe Discussion Board features.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Thread</b>	The initial post and the entire series of replies to that post within a Discussion Board Forum.
<b>Thread Detail</b>	The page that displays the threaded view of all posts in a thread along with the selected post.
<b>Post</b>	A Discussion Board entry posted to a thread or used to start a thread. Also used as a verb to refer to the act of submitting a post.
<b>Forum Role</b>	A role type that is assigned to all members of the Discussion Board for each Forum and enables specific privileges within the Forum. A user may have one role per Forum, however, a user's role in each Forum may differ.
<b>Blocked</b>	A Forum Role that blocks the user from accessing the Forum.
<b>Reader</b>	A Forum Role that grants the user the rights to read the contents of a Forum. Users with this role may only view content and cannot add or respond to posts.
<b>Participant</b>	A Forum Role that grants the user read and write privileges in the Forum.
<b>Grader</b>	A Forum Role that grants the user Participant privileges as well as the Grading privileges for the Forum.
<b>Moderator</b>	A Forum Role that grants Participant privileges as well as the ability to modify, delete, and lock posts. If a Moderation Queue is used, the Moderator may also approve or reject posts in the queue.
<b>Manager</b>	A Forum Role that grants all privileges.
<b>GradeForum</b>	The process of assigning a Grade to a user for their performance in a Forum.
<b>Grade Thread</b>	The process of assigning a Grade to a user for their performance in a thread.
<b>Rate Post</b>	The process of evaluating a post based on a fixed, 5 point scale.

Term	Definition
<b>Collect Posts</b>	The process of selecting one or more posts or threads for inclusion in on a page that can be sorted, filtered, printed, and saved as a document. The collection is gathered into a format that can be sorted, filtered, printed, and saved as a document that can be viewed in a browser.
<b>Flag</b>	A mark used to call attention to the post.
<b>Copy Forum</b>	The process of creating a clone of a Forum or the Forum settings in the same discussion board or in another discussion board in the same Course or Organization.
<b>Save Posts</b>	The act of saving a post as a draft.
<b>Published Post</b>	A post that has been submitted and, if necessary, approved by a moderator.
<b>Post Position</b>	The position of a post in a thread relative to the other posts.
<b>Draft</b>	A post that has been saved for future editing.
<b>Locked Thread</b>	A thread that is visible for reading but cannot be modified. Users may not post to a locked thread.
<b>Unavailable Thread</b>	A thread that is hidden and inaccessible to all users except Forum Managers.
<b>Hidden Thread</b>	A Thread that is locked and not visible by default. Users may view hidden threads by enabling the Display Hidden Threads feature.
<b>Moderation Queue</b>	A list of posts that must be approved before they will appear in the Discussion Board.

## View and Organize Discussion Board Content

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### Overview

Forums can appear throughout a Course, in any area where an Instructor chooses. Each group may also have a private Discussion Board with Forums available only to those users that are a part of the group. All Forums that are not a part of a group are accessible from various points in the Course or by going to the Discussion Board tool. The Discussion Board tool centralizes all of the Forums in the Course.

Please keep in mind that when users open the Discussion Board tool they will only see those Forums they can access. Unavailable Forums can only be viewed by Instructors, Administrators, and other user roles with similar permissions. The unavailable status of a Forum is displayed on the Discussion Board page, beneath the name of the Forum.

### Search

A search function appears as a magnifying glass icon at the top of the page throughout the Discussion Board. Click this icon to show or hide the search fields, thus conserving screen space in the Discussion Board.

The search fields include keyword, date and time restrictions, and options for where to search. The search function starts at the current level and options exist to work up. For example, in a thread, the default search option only searches that thread but options exist to search the entire Forum or all Forums. From the search function, users can search all Forums in the Course, including any Forums that appear in the user's groups.

### Thread Status

The Forum Manager can change the status of a thread to one of the following:

- **Published:** A published thread is available to users.
- **Locked:** Users may read the thread but not make any additions or modifications. Locking a thread allows Grades to be assigned without users updating or changing posts.
- **Unlocked:** Unlocking a thread allows users to modify and add to the thread.
- **Hidden:** Hidden threads do not display unless the user chooses. Hidden threads may not be modified. Hiding threads removes outdated threads and makes relevant content easier to find.
- **Unavailable:** Unavailable threads are only visible to Forum managers. Even then, Forum managers must choose to view these threads. Making threads unavailable means that other users cannot view the thread.

Follow these steps to change the status of a thread:

1. Open a Forum in the Discussion Board.
2. Select threads.
3. Choose a new status for the selected threads using the **Change Status to:** drop-down list.
4. Click **Go**.

## Forum View

The Forum view lists the threads in the Forum and includes several options for displaying and managing threads. The Forum can be viewed in one of two contexts: Tree View or List View. This choice remains in effect until the user changes it; it can be changed at any time. These choices are available above the Action Bar.

### Tree View

The Tree View presents the thread starter messages and their child messages. The child messages can be expanded and collapsed by using the plus/minus icon next to each message. Unread threads and posts are displayed in bold type; if a thread starter message has unread children, then the thread starter message is displayed in bold if its children are collapsed.

A search function and an action bar that includes the following functions are available at the top of the page:

Function	Purpose
Add Thread	Initiate a new thread.
Remove	Remove the selected posts from the Forum. Deleted posts cannot be restored. Use the unavailable function to completely hide posts from users without actually deleting the threads.
Collect	Gather selected posts onto one page where they can be sorted, filtered, or printed.
Flag	Mark a post for later attention. This is only displayed in the Tree View.
Clear Flag	Remove a flag applied to a post. This is only displayed in the Tree View.
Mark Read	Click to mark selected messages as read.
Mark Unread	Click to mark selected messages as unread.

### List View

The List View presents the list of threads in a tabular format. The threads can be sorted by clicking the carat at the top of each column:

List View Column	Description
Checkbox	Allows for individual thread selection.
Flag	Displays an indicator for any thread that contains flagged posts.
Subscription	Displays the user's subscription status for each thread. This is available only if subscriptions are enabled.
Thread	Displays the title of the thread.
Author	Displays the author of the thread.
Date	Displays the date and time the thread was posted.
Status	Displays the status of the thread.
Tags	Displays any tags that have been applied to the thread. This is visible only if tags have been enabled.
Unread Posts	Displays the number of unread posts in the thread. This number is a link leads to a Collections page that contains all unread posts.

List View Column	Description
Total Posts	Displays the total number of posts in the thread.

Posts within the thread are viewed by clicking on the hyperlinked name of the thread in the Thread column.

### Action Bar

The functions at the top of the page include a Display option to show threads of different status and a search function. Unread threads and posts are displayed in bold type. There is also an action bar that includes the following functions:

Function	Which View?	Purpose
Add Thread	Both Views	Click to add a thread.
Remove	Both Views	Click to remove any selected threads from the Forum.
Collect	Both Views	Gather selected threads onto one page where posts can be sorted, filtered, or printed.
Flag	Tree View	Mark a post for later attention.
Clear Flag	Tree View	Remove a flag applied to a post.
Mark Read	Both Views	Click to mark selected messages as read.
Mark Unread	Both Views	Click to mark selected messages as unread.
Subscribe/Unsubscribe	Both Views	Click to subscribe or unsubscribe to the thread.
Grade Forum	Both Views	Click to assign a Grade to a particular Forum (Graders or Managers only). This appears only if grading is enabled for this Forum.
Change Status to:	List View	Update the availability status of the selected threads.

### Thread View

Clicking on a thread in a Forum brings up the Thread Detail. The thread view is divided into three parts. Post viewing and management functions appear at the top of the page. The middle of the page displays a list of posts, with replies nested underneath the original post. The bottom of the page displays the current post. Unread posts are displayed in bold type.

The following options are available when viewing a thread:

Feature	Description
<b>Action Bar</b>	
Collect	Group posts into an organized filterable and sortable set.
Flag	Mark a post for later attention.

Feature	Description
Clear Flag	Remove a flag applied to a post.
Grade Thread	Enter a Grade for a user based on their performance in the Thread. This option only appears if the user is a Grader or Manager and the thread is graded.
Mark Read	Click to mark selected messages as read.
Mark Unread	Click to mark selected messages as unread.
Subscribe/Unsubscribe	Click to receive an email alert when a post is updated or a user posts a reply. This only appears if thread subscription is enabled. Click again to stop receiving email alerts
<b>Message List</b>	
Arrange View Buttons	Three buttons at the top corner of the message list provide different display options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swap Up/Down. This option moves the message list up or down on the Thread Detail page.</li> <li>• Hide/Restore to Minimum. This option hides the message list or displays a minimum number of messages.</li> <li>• Maximize/Minimize. This option displays all of the messages in the message list, including their children, or displays a minimum number of messages.</li> </ul>
Select Threads	Select each thread using the checkboxes or the select all/unselect all options. Selected Threads are included in Action Bar operations.
Previous Thread/Next Thread	Click these options to navigate through the threads in the Forum.
Refresh	Click to refresh the thread.
Selection Drop-Down	Use this drop-down list to select all the messages on this page, unselect all the messages on this page, or switch the previous selection.
Expand/Collapse Messages	Click the plus/minus icon next to each message to expand (plus) or collapse (minus) the parent message and all of its children.
<b>Current Post</b>	
Reply	Generate a response to a post.
Quote	Click to insert the text of the current post into a reply to that post. This only appears if this option is enabled for the Forum.
Modify	Change the content of the post. This only appears if this option is enabled in the Forum or the user is a Forum Manager or Moderator.

Feature	Description
Set Flag/Clear Flag	Click to flag or un-flag this post. This changes whether or not the user has already flagged this post.
Remove	Remove the post. Removing a post also removes all the replies to that post.
Previous Post/Next Post	Click these options to navigate through the posts in the thread.
Overall Rating	Select a score for the post on a 1 to 5 scale. This only appears if the Rating option has been enabled.
Show Parent Message	Click to display the text of the parent message. This option remains in effect for the user until it is changed.
Hide Parent Message	Click to hide the text of the parent message. This option remains in effect for the user until it is changed.

## Collections

Collections gather posts into a printable, sortable format. Collections are a good way to organize posts for quick reading. The following options are available on the Collections page:

Feature	Description
<b>Action Bar</b>	
Print	Click to print selected messages.
Mark Read	Click to mark selected messages as read.
Mark Unread	Click to mark selected messages as unread.
Add Tag	Select specific messages from the list, enter a tag in the field and click Go to add this tag to the messages This only appears for Managers and only if tags have been enabled for the Forum.
<b>Filter</b>	
Author	Select an author from the drop-down list to display messages created only by that author.
Status	Select a status from the drop-down list to display only messages that have that status.
Read Status	Select a Read Status from the drop-down list to display only messages that correspond to that Read Status.
Tags	Select a tag from the drop-down list to display only messages that have that tag. This only appears if tags have been enabled in the Forum.
<b>Message List</b>	
Selection Drop-Down	Use this drop-down list to select all the messages on this page, unselect all the messages on this page, or switch the previous selection.

Feature	Description
Sort by	Select one of the following options to sort the messages on this page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author's First Name</li> <li>• Author's Last Name</li> <li>• Date</li> <li>• Subject</li> <li>• Thread</li> <li>• Overall Rating</li> </ul>
In ... Order	Choose between Ascending and Descending sort order from this drop-down list.
Tags	Displays any tags that are associated with this message. Managers can add tags by clicking Add, entering the name of the tag, and clicking Go. Remove any tags by clicking the red "X" icon next to the tag.
Reply	Generate a response to a post.
Quote	Click to insert the text of the current post into a reply to that post. This only appears if this option is enabled for the Forum.
Mark as Unread	Click to mark the current message unread.

### Tagging Messages

Forum managers can create and apply text labels of their own choosing to messages in a Forum; other Discussion Board users can read, filter, and search messages using the tags, but cannot create new ones. Tags allow arbitrary message grouping independent of thread or thread status.

Follow these steps to create and apply tags:

1. Select specific messages and click Collect. The Collection page appears.
2. Select the messages to tag from the message list using the checkboxes. Select all of the messages by choosing Select All and clicking Go.
3. Enter a new tag name in the Add Tag field.
4. Click Go to apply the new tag.



**Tip**

**Tip:** For faster Discussion Board page loading, turn tagging off.

If Instructors are experiencing long Discussion Board page loads, they may consider enabling tagging on a temporary basis at certain times in the Course, tagging selected messages at that time, and then disabling it during times of anticipated heavy Forum usage. Re-enabling tagging at the end of the term would restore all of the previously entered tag data to view in the pages.

## Adding Forums

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### Overview

The Discussion Board is made up of (Undefined variable: BbVariables\_AS.plural forum). Adding (Undefined variable: BbVariables\_AS.plural forum) is accomplished on the Add Forum page.

### Find this page

Follow these steps to open the Add Forum page:

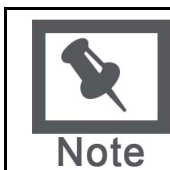
1. Open a Course.
2. Click Discussion Board. The Discussion Board page appears.
3. Click Add Forum. The Add Forum page appears.

### Fields

The table details the fields on the Add Forum page.

Field	Required?	Description
<b>Forum Information</b>		
Name	Yes	Enter the name of the Forum.
Description	No	Enter a description of the Forum in the virtual text box.
<b>Forum Availability</b>		
Available	No	Make the Forum available or not.
Choose date and time restrictions	No	Use the Display After and/or the Display Until checkboxes to limit Forum availability.
Date and Time fields	No	Use the Month, Day, Year, Hour, Minute, and AM/PM drop-down lists to select a specific date and time.
Calendar Button	No	Click the button to select a date using a calendar GUI.
<b>Forum Settings</b>		
Allow anonymous posts	No	Allow anonymous posts on the Forum.
Allow author to remove own posts	No	Allow authors to remove their own posts.
Allow author to modify own published posts	No	Allow author to edit their own published posts.
Allow message tagging	No	Allow tags to be added to messages on the Forum. For faster Discussion Board page loading, do not allow message tagging.

Field	Required?	Description
Allow users to reply with quote	No	Allow users to include the text of the original message in any replies to that message. This is enabled by default.
Allow file attachments	No	Allow files to be attached to messages within the Forum.
Allow members to create new threads	No	Allow Forum members to create new threads in the Forum.
Allow members to rate posts	No	Enable Forum members to rate individual posts.
Force moderation of posts	No	Require that all messages are reviewed before they are posted to the Forum.
<b>Subscribe</b>		
Do not allow subscriptions	No	No subscriptions for this Forum.
Allow members to subscribe to threads	No	Allow subscription to threads only.
Allow members to subscribe to Forum	No	Allow subscription to the entire Forum.
<b>Grade</b>		
No grading in Forum	No	No grading in the Forum.
Grade Forum	No	Enable grading at the Forum level.
Grade threads	No	Enable grading at the thread level.



**Note:** Grading and Rating are Enterprise License options.

## Add or Modify Forum

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### Overview

Forums are used to organize threads. While Instructors must create new Forums, they can enable other users to manage a Forum once it is created. The fields on the Add Forum page and the Modify Forum page are the same. The Add Forum page opens with empty fields while the Modify Forum page opens with a Forum already populated.

### Find this page

Follow the steps below to open the Add Forum page or Modify Forum page.

1. Click **Discussion Board** in the Course Tools area of the ControlPanel.
2. Click **Add Forum**. To modify a Forum, click **Modify** and the Modify Forum page will appear.

### Fields

The table below details the fields on this page.

Field	Description
<b>Forum Information</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Enter a title. This title will appear as the name of the Discussion Board Forum to all users.
<b>Description</b>	Enter a description of the Forum.
<b>Forum Settings</b>	
Check the appropriate boxes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow anonymous posts.</li> <li>• Allow author to edit message after posting.</li> <li>• Allow author to remove his or her posts.</li> <li>• Allow file attachments.</li> <li>• Allow new threads.</li> </ul>	
<b>Forum User Settings</b>	
Highlight a user and click the appropriate button to assign Forum User Settings.	
<b>Normal</b>	Normal settings allow users to read posts and create posts in a Forum.
<b>Admin</b>	Assigns Forum administrator privileges to a selected user. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent Forum Administrator – the person who created the Forum. No one can take away these privileges.</li> <li>• Forum Administrator privileges – assigned by the Permanent Forum Administrator. Enables another user to manage the Forum.</li> </ul>

Field	Description
<b>Block</b>	Blocks a user from posting to the Discussion Board Forum. Only the Forum Administrator or the Permanent Forum Administrator can block a user.
<b>Unblock</b>	Unblocks a blocked user.

## Add Archive

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### Overview

New archives are created on the Add Archive page. Once a new archive is created, threads can be added through the Modify Archive page.

### Find this page

Follow the steps below to open the Add Archive page.

1. Click **Discussion Board** in the Course Tools area of the Control Panel.
2. Double-click on a Forum link.
3. Select **Click Here for Archives**.
4. Click **Add Archive**.

### Fields

The table below details the available fields on this page.

Field	Description
<b>Add Archive</b>	
<b>Archive Title</b>	Enter a title for the archive.
<b>Description</b>	Enter a description for the archive.
<b>Available</b>	Select this option to make this archive available for Students to view.

## Initiate a Thread

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### Overview

Threads are a series of posts related to a similar topic. When creating a Forum, the Instructor has the option of allowing or not allowing users to start threads. If threads are graded, users cannot start threads. Generally, the purpose of the Forum will dictate whether or not users can start threads. A moderated, graded Forum used to evaluate Student performance will usually be tightly controlled. In this case, it would not be appropriate to allow users to create threads. Other Forums are designed for users to share opinions and thoughts on tangential or unrelated topics. In this case, it is safe to allow users to create threads and spark discussions.

### Start a Thread

Follow these steps to start a thread.

1. Open a Discussion Board Forum.
2. Click **Add Thread** in the action bar. The Add Thread page will appear.
3. Enter a **Subject** and a **Message**. It is also possible to attach files to the post.
4. Click **Save** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit** to create the thread.

## **Respond to a Discussion Board Post**

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### **Overview**

Threads grow as users respond to the initial, and subsequent, posts. Replies build on one another to construct a conversation.

### **Reply to a Post**

Follow these steps to reply to a post.

1. Open a thread in a Forum.
2. Find a post.
3. Click **Reply** for that post.
4. Enter a **Subject** and a **Message**. It is also possible to attach files to the post. Only one file can be added using the Attachment function below the text box. When using the Visual Text Box Editor, multiple files may be added.
5. Click **Save** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit** to create the thread.
6. The post will appear in the thread underneath the original post.

## Subscriptions

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### Overview

Forum Managers can choose from the following subscription options for a Forum: no subscriptions, subscriptions at the thread level, or subscriptions at the Forum level. If subscription is enabled, then the Forum manager can choose to have subscription messages contain the message contents, or a link to the message.

### Enable Subscriptions

Follow these steps to enable subscriptions:

1. Create a new Forum or click **Modify** next to an existing Forum. The Add Forum or Modify Forum page appears.
2. Choose from one of the following options:
  - **Allow members to subscribe to threads.** Use this option to restrict subscription to specific threads within a Forum.
  - **Allow members to subscribe to Forum.** Use this option to allow subscriptions to all threads within a Forum.
3. Choose from one of the following options:
  - **Include message in the email.** Use this option to include the message text in the email notification and a link to reply to the message.
  - **Include link to a message.** Use this option to include a link to the message in the email notification.
4. Click **Submit** when finished.

### Disable Subscriptions

Once subscriptions are disabled, subscription alerts are suspended and Subscribe/Unsubscribe actions are no longer available. Previous subscription settings are not removed, but email alerts are no longer sent.

Follow these steps to disable subscriptions:

- Click **Modify** next to an existing Forum. The Modify Forum page appears.
- Click **Do not allow subscriptions.**
- Click **Submit** when finished.


## Grading Discussion Board Participation

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### Overview

In a classroom setting, Students are often expected to participate in class discussions and that participation is part of the equation when assessing performance. Within a classroom, participation performance can be ambiguous. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate the Student who is active but does not advance the discussion from the Student that speaks less frequently but with greater impact.

Student interactions with the Discussion Board are a permanent record of participation. The Instructor has the option to grade Students at the Forum level or at the thread level. In this way the Instructor can accurately compare Student participation to the expectations set forth.

	<b>Note:</b> Grading is an Enterprise License option.
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### Enable Grading

Grading options are enabled when the Forum is created or by modifying the Forum. Click **Modify** on the Discussion Board for a Forum to change its settings.

Once Grading has been enabled, a Grade Center Item is created and all the advanced management features that can be applied to the item should be managed from the Grade Center.

The **Grade** settings appear at the bottom of the Add Forum Page and the Modify Forum page. Select **Grade Forum** and enter a point value to evaluate participants on performance throughout the Forum. Select **Grade Threads** to evaluate participants on performance in each thread. When the **Grade Threads** option is used, a **Points Possible** option appears each time a thread is started. Keep in mind that users cannot create new threads if **Grade Threads** is selected for the Forum.


Forum Managers can enable thread grading directly from the thread list (in a Forum where thread grading is enabled). Follow these steps:

1. Click the Enable button in the Grade column for the appropriate thread and the Set Grade: page is displayed.
2. Enter a point value in the Points possible field and click Submit.

### Grade User Participation in a Forum

Follow these steps to evaluate performance in a Forum.


1. Open the Discussion Board. A list of Forums appears. For each Forum that may be graded, an icon appears in the **Grade** column.
2. Click the icon in the **Grade** column, or click Grade Forum in the action bar.
3. A list of users appears. Click **Grade** for a user.
4. A collection of the user's posts in the Forum will appear. Evaluate the posts and enter a **Grade in the Grade field at the top of the page.**
5. Click **Submit** to add the Grade to the Grade Center.

 <p>Note</p>	<p><b>Note:</b> Only users with a Forum Role of Grader or Manager may enter a Grade for a Forum. A Grader may not view his or her own work.</p>
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### Grade User Participation in a Thread

Follow these steps to evaluate performance within a thread.

1. Open the Discussion Board. A list of Forums will appear. For each Forum that may be graded, an icon will appear in the Grade column.
2. Open a Forum and select a thread.
3. Click **Grade Thread**. This button will only appear to users with a Forum Role of Grader or Manager.
4. A list of users will appear. Click **Grade** for a user.
5. A collection of the user's posts in the Thread will appear. Evaluate the posts and enter a **Grade in the Grade field at the top of the page**.
6. Click **Submit** to add the Grade to the Grade Center.

 <p>Note</p>	<p><b>Note:</b> The Grader is alerted to possible loss of Grade data if they click any button on the page that does not submit the Grade. Click Submit to save the Grade before you leave the page.</p>
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### Changing Discussion Board Grades

Follow these steps to change Discussion Board Grades:

1. Navigate to the Grade: page.
2. Click the number in the Grade field or click Clear Grade to delete the existing Grade.
3. Enter a new Grade and click Submit.

### Disable Grading for a Forum or Thread

Use the Modify Forum feature to change the grading option to select **No Grading**. If Grades have already been entered for the Forum or its threads, a warning message will appear that changing the setting will remove the associated Grade Center Items. Click **OK** to continue or click **Cancel** to preserve the Grade Center Items.

## **Peer Review Through the Discussion Board**

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### **Overview**

A common learning tool in classrooms is providing feedback to other Students on their work. Students prepare an essay, lab report, or presentation and share it with the class. Other Students are asked to comment on the work and offer criticisms for improvement. This process helps the Student improve their Assignment, but is even more valuable to the Students that review the work. Reviewing the work of another Student enforces classroom learning and helps the reviewer practice important communication skills.

The Discussion Board is the perfect place in a Course for peer review. Each Student may start a thread and include their work in the initial post. Other Students then review the work, assign a rating to the initial post, and include comments in a response. As users respond, the feedback expands as users reinforce and build on points made by other Students.

Users can respond to a post using a 5-star rating system. To enable this feature, select **Allow members to rate posts** when creating the Forum.

### **Rating a Discussion Board Post**

Open a thread and view the posts. Each post has an **Overall Rating** field with five stars. The stars show the overall rating that the post has received from users. Click on the **Rate this Post** drop down list and select a rating from 0 to 5 stars. Your rating is now included in the **Overall Rating** and your individual rating appears in the **Rate this Post** field. A user may not rate the same post more than once..

## **Keeping the Discussion Board Content Safe**

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### **Overview**

Discussion Boards give Students the freedom to share their thoughts and opinions on class topics with other users. Occasionally, Students may introduce material to the Discussion Board that is inappropriate for the class discussion. Depending on the maturity and the sensitivity of the Students in the Course, it may be important to review Student posts for inappropriate content before sharing posts with the rest of the class.

Instructors can assign Discussion Board users to act as moderators. Moderators review posts before they are added to a thread and displayed to the class. The Moderator may be the Instructor or other responsible participants.

It is also possible to prevent an individual user from posting at all. Assigning a user the role of Blocked will prevent the user from accessing the Forum. Assigning an individual user the role of Reader will allow the user to view content in the Discussion Board but prevent the user from posting content.

### **Security Settings**

The following settings are available when creating a Discussion Board to ensure that content is appropriate.

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Description</b>
Allow anonymous posts	If this feature is turned off users are identified by their username whenever they post a reply. Making members accountable for the content that they post is a deterrent for users that wish to post inappropriate content.  Be careful when disabling this feature as there are instances where learning can benefit from anonymous posts, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. If this feature is enabled, the Forum cannot be graded.
Allow authors to remove own posts and Allow author to modify own published posts	Members are deterred from posting inappropriate content if they do not have control of the content once it is posted.
Allow members to create new threads	Preventing members from starting threads helps focus their posts on the topic.
Force moderation of posts	Moderating posts requires that all posts are reviewed by a responsible party before the content is shared with the class.

### **Moderate a Forum**

Set up a moderator on the Manage Forum Users page. Otherwise, the Forum manager must take responsibility for approving posts.

Follow these steps to moderate Forum posts.

Open the Forum.

1. Click **Moderate Forum**. The **Moderate Forum** button will only appear in the action bar if you have a Forum Role of Manager or Moderator.
2. The Moderation Queue will appear with a list of posts that are awaiting approval. The posts appear in chronological order. Those at the top have been in the queue for longer than those at the bottom.
3. Click **Moderate** for a post. The Moderate Post page will appear displaying the message.
4. Select **Publish** or **Return**. If returning the post, add a message to the author explaining why the post is being returned and some suggestions for modifying the post so it is appropriate for the discussion.
5. Click **Submit**. If the post is approved it will now be shown in the Forum. If the post is not approved, it will only appear to the author and the Moderator in the Forum. The post will be marked returned and the Moderator comments when returning the post will appear as a reply.

### Prevent a User from Posting

There may be an instance where a user should not be allowed to post at all because of past history of inappropriate posts or if the user has not been participating in discussions throughout the term. Assign a user the Forum Role of Reader if the user is allowed to view the Forum but not add content. Assign a user the Forum Role of Blocked to prevent the user from accessing the Forum.

## **Delegating Discussion Board Administration**

### **Overview**

Discussion Boards can serve several different purposes in a Course. In many cases, the Instructor does not wish to be actively involved in the Discussion Board and would like to pass off some or all of the administration of the Discussion Board to another responsible user. Discussion Board Forums include roles for each user involved in the Forum. These roles define privileges within the Forum. The Forum Roles with administrative roles that can be assigned to users in a Forum are:

- Manager
- Moderator
- Grader

### **Manager**

Managers have full control over the Forum. Managers can change the Forum settings, moderate posts, and assign Grades. The role of Manager should only be assigned to the Course Instructor or someone with similar responsibilities. Users with a Course role of Instructor or Teaching Assistant are granted this Forum Role by default.

### **Moderator**

Moderators review posts before they are made available to all users in the Course. Moderators may also delete and modify all posts in any Forum, even if the Forum does not use the Moderation Queue. Make sure that Moderators are responsible and understand the criteria for appropriate posts. Users with a Course role of Course Builder are granted this Forum Role by default.

### **Grader**

Graders review Discussion Board posts and enter Grades in the Grade Center. The Grader role has some access to the Grade Center and should only be assigned to users responsible for guiding and evaluating learning such as Instructors and Teaching Assistants. Graders do not have access to the Control Panel as part of their Forum privileges. Users with a Course role of Grader are granted this Forum Role by default.

### **Define a User's Role in a Forum**

Follow these steps to assign a user a role in a Forum.

1. Open the Discussion Board.
2. Click **Manage** for a Forum.
3. The Manage Forum Users page will appear.
4. Select a role for users from the drop-down list. The default value is Participant. Participants can read and post but have no administrative privileges.
5. Click **OK**. The Forum Roles are now assigned.

## Incorporating Discussion Board Forums into the Learning Process

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### Overview

Discussion Board Forums can be accessed from the Discussion Board tool that lists all the Forums in the Course. This centralized view is an easy access point, but there are other ways to access Discussion Board Forums that immerse the user in the learning experience. For example, Discussion Board Forums can be placed in any content area. Thus, a Discussion Board Forum may appear following lecture notes on the same topic. Further, using adaptive release or date availability restrictions, the Forum may only appear after users complete the lesson or after the Instructor has delivered the lecture in class.

### Add a Discussion Board Forum to a Content Area

Follow these steps to add a Forum within a content area.

1. Open the Control Panel and navigate to the Content Area and folder where the Forum will appear.
2. On the right side of the action bar, select **Discussion Board** from the **Select** drop-down list. Click **Go**.
3. Choose **Select a Discussion Board Forum** and select a Forum from the list. Click **Next**. Note that the **Discussion Board page** option will link to the Discussion Board Page and show all the Forums in the Course. Click **create new Forum** to build a new Forum. The Forum will not appear in the desired content area after creation. Navigate back to the content area and use the **Select a Discussion Board Forum** option to place the new Forum in the correct location.
4. Add information about the link on the next page. This determines how the link to the Forum will appear in the content area. Click **Submit**.

### Define Requirements for Viewing the Discussion Board Forum

Discussion Board links are subject to date restrictions and adaptive release restrictions. When restrictions are in place users cannot access the Forum from within the content area or from within the Discussion Board tool. The Instructor always has access to every Forum through the Control Panel.

## **Discussion Board Statistics**

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### **Overview**

The Performance Dashboard keeps track of user activity throughout the Course, including the Discussion Board. This information can help Instructors quickly identify Students that are outside the normal range of participation. Instructor can use this information to reward achievement and assist Students that are struggling with the material.

### **View Discussion Board Statistics**

Follow these steps to view Discussion Board statistics for a user.

1. Click Performance Dashboard on the Control Panel.
2. The number of Forums where a user has posted appears as a link in the Discussion Board column. Click the link to view details.
3. A page appears that lists the following information:
  - Total Posts
  - Date of Last Post
  - Average Post Length (number of characters)
  - Minimum Post Length (number of characters)
  - Maximum Post Length (number of characters)
  - Average Post Position
  - Grade (if the post is not yet graded, the Instructor may click a link to the Grade Center to add a Grade)