Discussion Board

Topics

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• Threads
• Forum Settings
• Managing Users
• Archive Changes

DISCUSSION BOARD – ADD, MODIFY, HIDE
• Add (Posting a Discussion)
• Add Content (New Thread) to a Discussion Forum
• Reply to a Discussion
• Modify a Discussion
• Make a Discussion Hidden or Unavailable

Discussion Board is used to set up forums that function as electronic discussion groups. Both instructors and the students in a discussion group can post messages that others can read. These messages can either begin a new topic or subtopic for discussion, or comment on someone else’s post on a topic. Postings are “threaded”; that is, replies to the first comment on a topic, and replies to replies are grouped together so that a viewer can see the relationships among the posts.

Discussion Board is a centralised location for all discussion forums. Discussion forums can appear anywhere in the course, but are all listed on the Discussion Board. Groups can have their own private Discussion Boards with multiple forums.

Discussion Board – What’s New
• The Discussion Board search tools are more powerful and easier to use.
• Capabilities that were previously on different pages have been arranged on single pages.
• Users can Rate individual posts and Grade selected threads.
• There are more options available when creating a new Forum.

Forums

The Forum List page includes several new functions and streamlines several existing features.
• Any user can identify forums that contain unread posts, number of participants, and total number of posts by using the Forum List Page headers.
• Any user can search for specific messages in all of the forums listed on the Forum List page, other Discussion Boards, or Group forums created within courses by using the Search tools.
• Instructors can manage users within a particular forum by clicking the Manage button which replaces the old Forum User Settings.
• Instructors can change the display order of the forums by using the Display Order fields.
• Instructors can copy whole forums from this page to different groups by selecting the Copy button.
Threads

The Thread List page contains functions that were in several locations in the prior versions.

- Clicking on a thread will display the Thread Detail screen with the content underneath.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/21/06 8:39 PM</td>
<td>test</td>
<td>Katherine Ille</td>
<td>Published</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/23/06 12:45 PM</td>
<td>question 1</td>
<td>Katherine Ille</td>
<td>Published</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the changes to the Discussion Board are represented on the Thread Detail page.

- Managers can delete existing threads by selecting them and clicking **Remove**.
- Any user can navigate between posts and threads by clicking **Previous/Next Thread** and **Previous/Next Post**.
- Participants can reply to individual posts by clicking **Reply**.
- Any user can **Flag** selected posts for later reference and **Clear Flags**.

- Any user can search for messages in the current forum, other Discussion Boards, or Group forums created within courses by using the **Search** tools.
- Any user can collect specific posts in the thread to be displayed on a single page by selecting them and clicking **Collect**.
Forum Settings
Forum options that used to be located in different locations are united under Forum Settings on the Create Forum page. There is a Grading option available.

Managing Users
There is now a specific Managing Users function which replaces the old Forum User Settings.

There are six roles available. Previous versions only had three roles (Permanent Moderator, Moderator, and Blocked). These roles can be automatically assigned based on course roles. This feature can be customised for each forum.

- Managers can create and modify forums.
- Moderators can review messages before they are posted on the forum.
- Graders can grade message threads.
- Participants can initiate threads, post messages and reply to existing messages.
- Readers can only read messages.
- Blocked users cannot participate in the Discussion Board.
Archive Changes

Discussion Board threads which were part of an archive under Blackboard 6 are no longer displayed in an archive under Blackboard 7, but are instead listed in the forum with the status Unavailable or Hidden.

Archives settings in the pre-upgrade discussion board affect the availability of posts in the upgraded Blackboard 7 discussion board as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Upgrade</th>
<th>After Upgrade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive unavailable to students</td>
<td>Posts have status: Unavailable Student are not able to see those posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archive available to students</td>
<td>Posts have status: Hidden Students are not able to see those posts under the default view, but have the option to view them by selecting Show All or Hidden on the option list for Display when in List View.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion Board - Add, Modify, Hide

Add (Posting) a Discussion

1. Open your Blackboard course.
2. Select Control Panel from the left menu.
3. Select Discussion Board under the Course Tools block.
4. Select the Add Forum button.
5. On the Add Forum screen under:
   - **Forum Information** type the Name of the forum and a Description of the forum topic.
   - **Forum Settings** select options as required.
     - **Note:** Allow anonymous posts should **not** be selected as all contributors should be identifiable.

   ![Forum Settings](image)

   - **Submit**, click on Submit once you have completed this screen to return to the Discussion Board screen.
Add Content (New Thread) to a Discussion Forum

1. Click on the Forum link to add content to the forum.

2. Click on the Thread button to create a new discussion thread.

3. At the Add Thread screen under:
   - **Subject** type in the Subject and Message
   - **Attachment** provide an attachment if applicable
   - **Submit** click on the Submit button to return to the Discussion Board screen.

4. Click OK at the:
   - **Course Discussion screen** to return to the Discussion Board screen
   - **Discussion Board** screen to return to the Control Panel.

5. Select a location to return to from the navigation path at the top of the screen, or left menu.

Reply to a Discussion

1. Open your Blackboard course.

2. Select Communication from the left menu.

3. Select Discussion Board from the list of items.

4. Select the Forum link.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing Discussion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Click on the current discussion item to display the details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Thread</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/20/07 3:25 PM</td>
<td>Today's weather</td>
<td>Student1firstname Student1lastname</td>
<td>Published</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Click on the Reply button.

7. On the reply to post screen under:
   - **Subject** Today's weather.
   - **Author** Student1firstname Student1lastname
   - **Creation date** Tuesday, October 2, 2007 3:25:02 PM EST
   - **Date last modified** Tuesday, October 2, 2007 3:25:02 PM EST
   - **Total views** 20, **Your views** 11

   Todays weather is wet.

   **Subject** Todays weather.

8. Click OK to return to the Course Discussion screen.

9. Click OK to return to the Discussion Board screen.

10. Click OK to return to the Communications screen.
Modify a Discussion

1. Open your Blackboard course.
2. Select Control Panel (Control Panel) from the left menu.
3. Select Discussion Board under the Course Tools block.
4. Select the relevant Forum.
5. Click on the Modify button next to the forum you wish to change.
6. Make the required changes on the Modify Forum screen, then under Submit click on the Submit button.
7. Click OK at the Discussion Board screen to return to the Control Panel.
8. Select a location to return to from the navigation path at the top of the screen, or left menu.

Make a Discussion Hidden or Unavailable

1. Open your Blackboard course.
2. Select Control Panel (Control Panel) from the left menu.
3. Select Discussion Board under the Course Tools block.
4. Select the required Discussion Board.
5. Select the required Forum.
6. Select the required Thread(s) by clicking on the tick box next to the thread(s).
7. Select either Hidden or Unavailable from the Change Status to drop down menu.
   - 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 threads are only visible to forum managers who must choose to view these threads. Making threads unavailable means that users can no longer view the thread.
8. Click OK.
9. Select Show all from the Display drop down list to view the list and status of all threads.
10. Click OK at the Discussion Board screen to return to the Control Panel.
11. Select a location to return to from the navigation path at the top of the screen, or left menu.
**Further Help and Information**

- Online Blackboard Instructor Manual – Discussion Board
- Online Blackboard Instructor Manual – Discussion Board Forum
- Blackboard staff how to guide – Staff First Steps, Using the Online Instructor Manual
- Blackboard (Minimum Online Presence) training http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=6sgd2h0t970p

**Discussion Board Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thread</td>
<td>The initial post and the entire series of replies to that post within a Discussion Board forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thread Detail</td>
<td>The page that displays the threaded view of all posts in a thread along with the selected post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Role</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocked</td>
<td>A forum role that blocks the user from accessing the forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>A forum role that grants the user read and write privileges in the forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grader</td>
<td>A forum role that grants the user Participant privileges as well as the Grading privileges for the forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>A forum role that grants all privileges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Forum</td>
<td>The process of assigning a grade to a user for their performance in a forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Thread</td>
<td>The process of assigning a grade to a user for their performance in a thread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Post</td>
<td>The process of evaluating a post based on a fixed, 5 point scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect Posts</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag</td>
<td>A mark used to call attention to the post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy Forum</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save Posts</td>
<td>The act of saving a post as a draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published Post</td>
<td>A post that has been submitted and, if necessary, approved by a moderator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Position</td>
<td>The position of a post in a thread relative to the other posts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>A post that has been saved for future editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locked Thread</td>
<td>A thread that is visible for reading but cannot be modified. Users may not post to a locked thread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailable Thread</td>
<td>A thread that is hidden and inaccessible to all users except forum Managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Thread</td>
<td>A thread that is locked and not visible by default. Users may view hidden threads by enabling the Display Hidden Threads feature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderation Queue</td>
<td>A list of posts that must be approved before they will appear in the Discussion Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>