

Discussion Board Forums

Overview

The Discussion Board is a communication tool that can be used to enhance a course Web site. Instructors create forums on specific topics in the Discussion Board. For example, an Instructor may create a Mid-Term Review forum, where Students may go ask and answer questions about the Mid-Term exam. Students may access forums by clicking on the appropriate link in the Discussion Board. When a forum is accessed a page appears which lists the different threads in the forum. A thread is a message that is posted to a forum. Participants can post new threads in a forum and reply to threads that have already been posted.

Note: Students are able to create new threads on the Discussion Board. If allowed by the Instructor a Student can create a forum, otherwise Students will only be able to add threads to existing topics.

The screenshot displays a Blackboard Discussion Board forum interface. At the top left, there is an "Add New Thread" button. Below it, there are options for "VIEW UNREAD MESSAGES" and "EXPAND ALL" / "COLLAPSE ALL". A "SEARCH" field is located on the right side. The main content area shows a list of threads for a "Mid-term exam" forum. The threads are listed with their subject lines, author names, dates, and times. A "SHOW OPTIONS" button is on the right. At the bottom left, there is a "Sort By" dropdown menu set to "Default", and an "OK" button is on the right.

To . . .	click . . .
start a new thread	Add New Thread . The Create New Message page will appear. On the Create New Message page a new subject title and discussion description may be added.
view all messages	the View all Messages up arrow. All messages appear.
view unread messages	the View Unread Messages down arrow. All unread

Find this page

Follow the steps below to open the Discussion Board Forum page.

- Step 1** Click **Discussion Board** on the course menu.
Step 2 Click a forum to open it and view the contents within.

Functions

The table below details the functions available on the Discussion Board Forum page.

To . . .	click . . .
start a new thread	Add New Thread . The Create New Message page will appear. On the Create New Message page a new subject title and discussion description may be added.
view all messages	the View all Messages up arrow. All messages appear.
view unread messages	the View Unread Messages down arrow. All unread

	messages will be shown.
see all the threads and responses	the Expand All plus icon. All threads and responses will appear.
see only the first message in each thread	the Collapse All minus icon. The topic threads will appear.
read a message	a message link. A new Discussion Board page will appear. Depending on their course role, users may modify, remove, or reply to a message.
view the tool bar	Options tab. The Options tool bar will appear.
view messages that have been archived by the Instructor	Click Here for Archives. A page will appear with the threads that have been archived from this forum. Archived messages must be made available by the Instructor.
resort the list of messages	the Sort by: drop-down list and select one of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Default: sort messages by the earliest date. • Author: sort messages by the author. • Date: sort messages by the earliest date. This is the default. • Subject: sort messages by the subject.

Options tab functions

The table below describes the functions available on the Options tab. Click **Show Options** to access these functions. To select multiple threads in a forum, choose the check box next to each thread that will be included.

To . . .	then . . .
select all threads and messages in the forum	click Select All .
unselect the selections	click Unselect All .
unselect the threads and messages that have been selected and select the threads and messages that have not been selected	click Invert .
mark messages as read	select the threads and messages, then click Read .
mark messages as unread	select the threads and messages, then click Unread .
view multiple threads or messages	select the threads and messages, then click Collect .
lock a thread or message	select the thread and messages, then click Lock .

Create New Message

Overview

When a new message is posted to a forum it starts a thread. All responses to the message appear under the message on the Discussion Board forum. The Create New Message page is used to add a new thread to a Discussion Board Forum.

Find this page

Follow the steps below to open the Create New Message page.

- Step 1** Click **Discussion Board** on the course menu or from the Communication Center.
- Step 2** Click on a forum link to open it and view the contents within.
- Step 3** Click **Add New Thread**.

Fields

The table below details the fields on the Create New Message page.

Field	Description
Message Information	
Current Forum:	The name of the Discussion Board Forum appears in this field.
Date:	The date appears in this field.
Author:	The name of the author appears here.
Subject:	Enter the subject of the thread.

Message:	Enter a message. Select a text type for the message from the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smart Text: Automatically recognizes a link entered in the text box. Smart text recognizes the ENTER key as a paragraph tag and accepts HTML tags as well.• Plain Text: Displays text as written.• HTML: Displays text as coded using HTML tags. Please note that embedded tags and Javascript will be disabled in any discussion board posts.
Post message as Anonymous	Select this check box and the message will be posted anonymously. The Instructor may make this feature unavailable.
Attachment	Enter the file path or click Browse to locate the file.

Your Response

Overview

Users add message to threads by posting messages in response to the previous messages in the thread. Messages are added to a thread from the Your Response page.

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Your Response:

Current Forum: General Discussion
Date: Tue Aug 6 2002 2:43 pm
Author: Dorn, Brian

Subject:

Message:

Options: Smart Text Plain Text HTML
 Post message as *Anonymous*

Attachment:

Find this page

Follow the steps below to open the Your Response page:

- Step 1** Click **Discussion Board** on the Course menu or from the Communication Center.
- Step 2** Click on a forum link to open it and view the contents within.
- Step 3** Open a message.
- Step 4** Click **Reply** to respond to the message.

Fields

The table below details the fields on this page.

Field	Description
Message Information	
Current Forum:	The name of the Discussion Board Forum appears in this field.
Date:	The date appears in this field.
Author:	The name of the author appears here.
Subject:	Subject defaults to the subject on the Add Thread page.

Message:	Enter a message. Select a text type for the message from the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Text: Automatically recognizes a link entered in the text box. Smart text recognizes the ENTER key as a paragraph tag and accepts HTML tags as well. • Plain Text: Displays text as written. • HTML: Displays text as coded using HTML tags.
Options	
Post message Anonymous	Select the check box to post an anonymous message. This option may or may not be available depending on the options selected when Discussion Forum was set up.
Attachment	Enter the file path or click Browse to locate the desired file.
Preview	Preview the message as it will appear on the Discussion Board.