

Blackboard Tips: Discussion Forums



In Blackboard (<http://blackboard.uscupstate.edu>), course members can have the thoughtful discussions that take place in the traditional classroom, but with the advantages of asynchronous communication. Participants don't need to be in the same location or time zone and can take the time to consider their responses carefully. Additionally, the use of discussion forums can create an opportunity for more equitable participation among course members.

Purpose and Applications

You can use discussion forums, also referred to as discussion boards, to:

- Encourage collaboration and social interaction.
- Pose questions about homework assignments, readings, and course content.
- Share thoughts and ideas about class materials and/or demonstrate understanding or application of course material.

How to Create a Discussion Forum

- Navigate to the Content Area where you would like the discussion board to be located (Learning Module, Assignments Page, etc.).
- From the course menu, select Tools → Discussion Board. Be sure Edit Mode is ON in the upper-right corner.

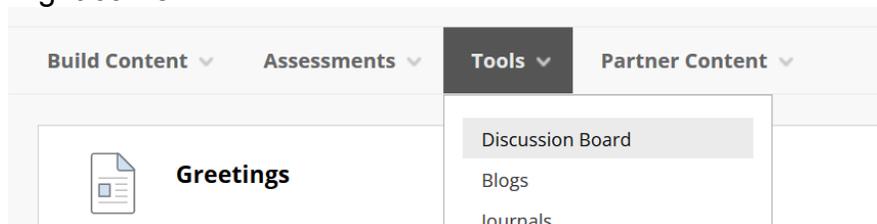


Figure 1: Course Menu Bar

- The Create Link: Discussion Board will open. Click on **Create New Forum**

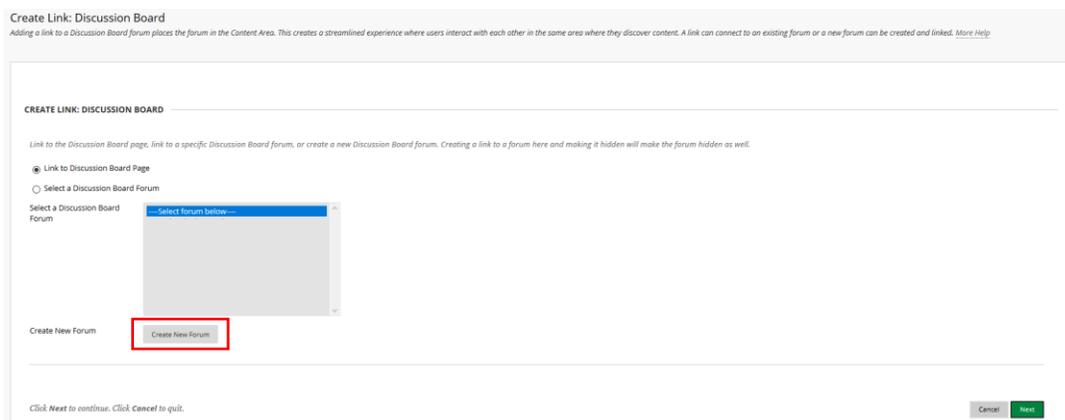


Figure 2: Create Link Page

For help implementing any Blackboard best practices in your classes, contact academicinnovation@uscupstate.edu.

Create Forum Settings

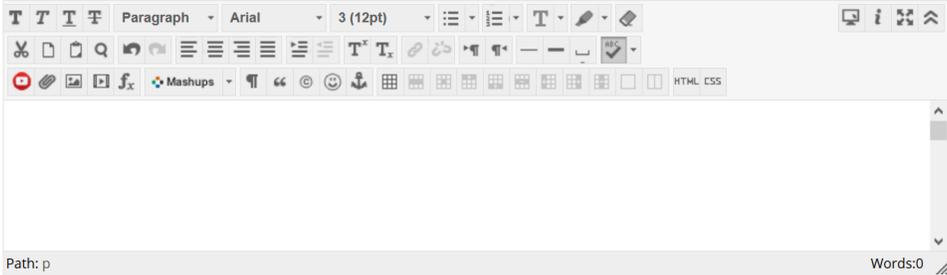
The **Create Forum** page has 3 sections: forum information, availability, and settings. Items noted with a red star are required in order to create a forum.

- In the **Forum Information** section, you will name your forum and give a description of its purpose. Both will be visible to the student.

FORUM INFORMATION

* Name

Description
For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



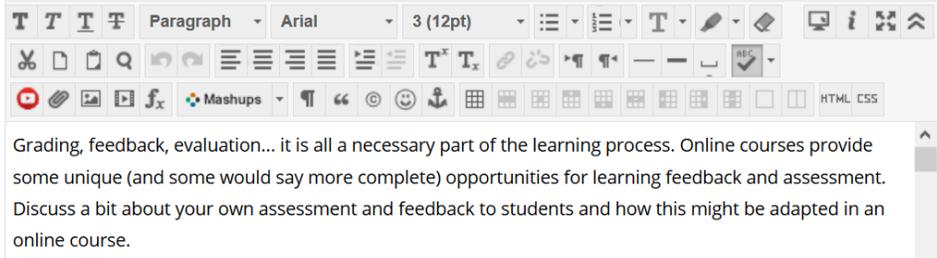
Path: p Words:0

Figure 3: Forum Information Area

- A common naming convention is Week/Module/Chapter Forum: Content Description, such as Week 1 Forum: Introductions.
- The description should inform students on the purpose of the forum and provide necessary guiding questions or directions. An example of a forum is given below:

* Name

Description



Grading, feedback, evaluation... it is all a necessary part of the learning process. Online courses provide some unique (and some would say more complete) opportunities for learning feedback and assessment. Discuss a bit about your own assessment and feedback to students and how this might be adapted in an online course.

Figure 4: Forum Information Example

- In **Forum Availability**, select 'Yes' to allow students to access the forum.

FORUM AVAILABILITY

Available Yes No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions

Display After

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Display Until

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Figure 5: Forum Availability

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- In **Forum Settings**, you can select options based on your grading choices.
- If you would like to grade the forum activity, select **Grade Discussion Forum** and enter a point value.
- Set a due date, check the box after **Due Date** and enter a time and date. The due date will put your assignment into the students' calendar and due dates notifications.
- If you wish to use a Rubric, select **Add Rubric** and add or create a rubric (see Blackboard Tips: Rubrics for help)
- Click **Submit** on the bottom right of the page to assign your Discussion Board.

Click **Submit** to proceed.



Figure 6: Submit to Assign Forum

Quick Tips for Use

- Compose prompts that create a need for discussion and leave room for varying opinions.
- When requiring replies, require students reference or remark on particular pieces of the original post.
- Give specific guidelines for length of response and level of detail. For instance, if you want two paragraphs, including a reference to a source, cited in APA Style, include this in the description.
- Create your own first thread and post the discussion prompt or question into your forum with the subject listed as Instructions or Respond Here.
- Establish “netiquette” rules before assigning a forum.

Additional Resources

- [Using Discussions in Blackboard](#)
- [Guide to Effective Use of Discussion Forums](#)
- [Ten Tips for Fostering Effective Online Discussions](#)
- [Grading Discussions in Blackboard](#)

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