Creating Discussions

**Discussion Forum** – sometimes referred to as a Forum or. It is an area where a topic or a group of related topics are discussed. The Discussion Board is the database of forums. Within each forum, there can be multiple threads. A thread includes the initial post and any replies to it. A post is a message within the thread.

**Note:** This tutorial was created using one particular browser; other browsers may display content differently. Some images have been cropped for clarity and do not represent the entire browser window.

**I. Creating a Discussion Forum** - There are two methods to creating a Discussion Forum as described in section I & II. The first method creates the forum within the compiled list on the Discussion Board. The second method provides directions on how to create a link to a new or existing forum on the Discussion Board.

1. Access your developmental course or the course you wish to create the discussion.
2. Ensure Edit mode is On.
3. Click **Discussions** in the Course Menu.
4. Click on **Create Forum**

Under **Forum Information**, give the forum a name. Users will click this name to access the forum.

6. Type a description of the forum and optionally any basic instructions in the **Description** box. You may attach documents, imagery, multimedia files, or Mashups if desired.

7. Under **Forum Availability**, select **Yes**.
8. You may wish to enter **Date and Time Restrictions** if needed for your course.
9. Under **Forum Settings**, you have many choices to make. Decide whether to allow anonymous posts, file attachments, thread creation, subscription, and member rating of posts. Each of these choices has advantages and disadvantages.

10. If you wish to have the forum graded, select the **Grade Discussion Forum** option and choose a point value to evaluate students on performance throughout the forum. Select the “needs grading” interval. This means that the system will add a colored exclamation point indicator after the number of entries you indicate, e.g. after 3 or 4 or 5.

11. Provide a Due Date so that this item will show up on the class calendar.

12. Add Rubric if you wish to use one when grading.

13. If you deselect **Allow Members to Create New Threads**, then you will need to create the thread or threads yourself so that users can Reply to the discussion board.

14. Select other options as desired. Click **Submit** when finished. This will return you to the Discussion Board window or if you created the forum in a content area you will see the link window as indicated in section II below.

**Note:** Students cannot create new threads or respond anonymously if the **Grade Threads** option is selected. A warning will pop-up if you select this option when you click on **Submit** asking you to confirm that this is what you want to do.
II. Creating and Linking a Discussion Forum in a Content Area

1. Access your developmental course or the course you wish to create the discussion.
2. Locate a content folder or content area that you wish to provide a link to a Discussion Board.
3. Hover over the green Tools menu and select Discussion Board.
4. On the Create Link screen you have three choices:
   a. Link to the Discussion Board which lists all the Forums,
   b. Link to a Discussion Forum that is already created,
   c. Create a New Forum.
5. Choose one of the first two options if you have already created a forum, then click **Next** and skip to step 10.
6. If you need a new forum, click the **Create New Forum** button.
7. Use the steps found above in section I steps 5-14 to create the forum. After clicking the submit button on step 14, you will be back at the Create Link screen.
8. Ensure the forum you just created is highlighted and click the **Next** button.
9. On the next screen, it is best to leave the Link Name the same as you named it above and place the same description that you used when you created the forum in step I.6 above.

10. Leave the default Options as is or change the display dates if you wish.

11. Click the Submit button.

12. Link to specific forum inside content area is now complete.
III. Creating a Thread within a Forum – If you created the forum so that students are unable to create new threads then you will need to create the first thread and any additional threads so that students can reply.

1. There are a couple ways to access a forum as an instructor:
   a. Click Discussion Forum on the left menu, then click on the name of the Forum or
   b. Click on the link to the forum in a content area.

2. Click on Create Thread

3. On the Create Thread page, give the thread a subject. This is required.

4. In the Message box enter your instructions for the student here along with any grading criteria. All text editor functions are available.

5. Click on Submit when finished.
IV. Replying to a thread
1. Locate the forum you wish to participate in.
2. Click on the discussion thread you wish to reply to.
3. Click on the Reply button on the comment or thread you wish to reply to.
4. Enter your reply. All text editor functions are available if desired.
5. Click Submit when finished.
6. This will return you to the Thread Detail window. When finished, click OK.
V. Grading a Discussion Forum - There are a couple routes you can use to grade a Discussion Forum as described below. The first route uses the Needs Grading menu found in the Control Panel. And second route uses the Course Content or Discussion Forum menu to access the forum for grading. Both routes end up at the same location.

1. Needs Grading Route:
   a. Locate the Course Management panel, click on Grade Center and select Needs Grading.
   b. Click on the student’s name next to the discussion you wish to grade.

2. Course Content or Discussion Menu Route:
   a. Locate the Discussion Forum in a content area or click the Discussion Forum menu on the left, then click on the Discussion Forum name.
   b. Click on the green Grade Discussion Forum button (Available if you chose to grade the forum and not just the threads)
   c. Click on the Grade button to the right of the student’s name.
3. All of the student's forum activity will be displayed here. After you have read all of the responses and replies, click on **Edit Grade** under the **Forum Grade** panel.

4. Enter the grade and any feedback and grading notes if desired.

5. Click on **Save Grade** when finished.