

Participating in Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are often used by instructors to facilitate discussion about course topics or provide course announcements. Please read below to participate in a discussion forum.

Discussion Forum Overview

- Discussion forums are indicated by the speech bubble  icon.
- Online courses typically have several standard discussion forums.
 - **Announcements:** A one-way forum for the instructor to make announcements to the whole class. You cannot post in this forum. You will receive an email of all announcements posted to this forum.
 - **Instructor's Office:** Many course instructors use this discussion forum for students to post questions about the course that may apply to the whole class. See the course syllabus and Moodle course page for specific information about how the instructor wants questions communicated.
 - **Extended Absences:** Many course instructors will ask you to post in this forum if you are going to be away from the course site for a longer period of time. See the course syllabus and Moodle course page for specific information about how the instructor wants absences communicated.
- Instructions for other course-specific discussion forums will be found within the course content.

Posting in a Discussion Forum

- Log in to Moodle and enter your course site.
- Click on the discussion forum you want to post in.
- Instructions for what to post will often appear on the resulting page. You may also find posting instructions on the unit lesson page or course syllabus. If you are not sure about what to post, first check the course content and then contact your instructor.
- When you are ready to post in the forum, click **Add a new discussion topic**.
 - If you do not see this option, it might be a [Q&A Forum](#).
- On the next page, enter a subject for your discussion post in the top text box. The subject will appear on the discussion's main page.
- The main body of your post should go in the **Message** box underneath the subject. Please see the [Text Editor Features](#) page for more information about entering text.

- Please note that your Moodle account will time out after two hours of inactivity. If you feel it might take you longer than two hours to post, or if you need to leave your post and come back to it later, copy your post into a text document (Word or Google Docs) to save it and then paste it back in Moodle when you're ready to post.
- If you need to attach a file to your post, click **Advanced** and follow the instructions for [adding a file](#).
- When you're done, click **Post to forum**.
 - You will have 15 minutes before your post is finalized. If you want to edit your post, click the subject of your post and click **Edit** in the bottom right corner of your post. Once the 15 minutes are up, the edit option will no longer appear.

Posting Audio/Video in a Discussion Forum

- Follow the directions above to start your discussion post.
- In the **Message** box, click either the microphone or video camera icon to begin your recording.
 - Please note that you need to have a microphone and webcam (for video) to use this feature. Most recent laptops come with both.
- Click the red **Start Recording** box.
- Your audio/video will start recording. If recording a video, you should see a camera preview in the box. The timer counts down the amount of time you have left.
- When you're finished, or if you need to start over, click **Stop Recording**.
- You can preview your recording if desired. If you wish to try again, click **Record Again** and follow the same process.
- Once you are satisfied with your recording, click **Attach Recording**.
- Your audio/video will start uploading to the discussion forum. Depending on the length of the media and internet connection speed, it could take some time.
- You can also add text or images to your discussion post.
- When you're done, click **Post to forum**.
 - You will have 15 minutes before your post is finalized. If you want to edit your post, click the subject of your post and click **Edit** in the bottom right corner of your post. Once the 15 minutes are up, the edit option will no longer appear.

Replying in a Discussion Forum

- Log in to Moodle and enter your course site.
- Click on the discussion forum's name.
- Click on the subject of the discussion post you want to reply to.
- After you have read the post, click on the **Reply** button in the bottom right corner of the post.
- A text box will appear underneath the post. Write your reply in the box and click **Submit**.
 - If you want more text formatting options, click **Advanced**.
- You will have 15 minutes before your reply is finalized. If you want to edit your reply, click the subject of the post and click **Edit** in the bottom right corner of your reply. Once the 15 minutes are up, the edit option will no longer appear.

Other Discussion Forum Options

- You can subscribe to most discussion forums by clicking the  gear in the upper right corner and choosing **Subscribe to this forum**. You will then receive emails when people have posted to this forum, based on your preferences in your [Moodle profile](#). Note that your instructor can override these settings in individual forums. You are automatically subscribed to the course announcement forum.
- Clicking the star to the left of a discussion subject will star the discussion thread. This can be useful when tracking which posts you've replied to.
- There are several options for how the post and replies are organized. You can set your preference by clicking the subject of a discussion post and using the dropdown menu at the top of the post. See the [Moodle Docs about display options](#) for more information.
- Moodle will track how many unread posts and replies you have in each forum. You can turn this off by clicking the  gear in the upper right corner and choosing **Don't track unread posts**.

Grades in Discussion Forums

- Often instructors will assign ratings to discussion forum posts and replies.
- Once the instructor has graded the post or reply, the rating will appear in the bottom left corner of the post.
- Grades can also be viewed from the grades  option in the left menu.
- Instructors often use the *sum of ratings* option for discussion posts, where the points awarded for your initial post and replies are added together to make your final grade. Please note that if your instructor grades the initial posts before the replies are due or if you happen to check your grade before your instructor is finished going through all the posts and replies, your grade might seem lower than expected. Check the bottom left corner of your initial posts and replies to see if all of them have been rated yet.
- Instructors can reply either to the whole class within a post, or to just you. If a reply is private, a message will appear above the reply indicating that you are the only one who can see the reply. Students do not have the option of replying privately to other students or to the instructor. If your instructor posts a private reply you'd like to respond to, please see the course materials for how your instructor would like to be contacted.

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