



Setting up Discussions

The Brightspace Discussion tool is very useful in enabling student interaction within online and blended environments. To set up discussions, forums must be created first. A forum exists to organize or group similar or recurring discussion topics. For example, to set up a weekly discussion, start by creating a forum titled “Weekly Discussions”. Within that forum, you would have weekly “topics”.

To Create a Forum

1. Navigate to the Discussions tab within the ribbon.
2. Select the blue “New” button and choose Forum. Name the forum and provide a description if desired.

The screenshot shows two panels. The left panel is titled 'Discussions' and has tabs for 'Discussions List', 'Subscriptions', and 'Group and Section Restrictions'. A 'New' button is highlighted, and a dropdown menu is open showing 'New Forum' and 'New Topic'. The right panel is titled 'New Forum Details' and has tabs for 'Properties' and 'Restrictions'. The 'Title' field contains 'Weekly Discussions'. Below the title is a checkbox labeled 'Create a new topic in this forum with the same title'.

3. Underneath the description area you may enable other options if desired such as “Allow anonymous posts”. If you wish to add date restrictions or release conditions, they can be enabled in the Restrictions tab. Remember that any options or restrictions that are enabled here will apply to every topic created in the forum.
4. Hit the blue save button. Your forum is now created.

Once a Forum has been created, Discussion Topics must be set up to allow students to post. The Topic is the space in which the discussion takes place.

To Create a Topic

1. Within the Discussions page, select the blue “New” button and choose Topic. Choose the appropriate forum from the drop-down menu, then name the Topic and provide a description. The description should provide instructions regarding the subject that the student will post about and identify any questions that the student should answer in their post. For example: “Provide your thoughts on this week’s content and identify any questions you may have”.

The screenshot shows the 'New Topic Details' form. The 'Forum' field is a dropdown menu with a blue highlight on 'Weekly Discussions'. Below the forum selection are two radio buttons: 'Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents' (selected) and 'Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads'. Below the radio buttons is the 'Title' field and the 'Description' field.



- The default is set to “open topic”. This means that everyone can access the topic and all other student contributions to the topic. For information on how to set up a group restricted topic, see “[Creating Group Based Discussions](#)”.
- Underneath the description area you may enable other options if desired. Any options selected here will only be applied to this topic. A common feature that many instructors choose to initiate is “Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads”. This option creates individualized thinking, as students are unable to see posts from others before they have made a post themselves. As a result, repetitive responses are reduced.

Options

- Allow anonymous posts ?
- A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic ?
- Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads ?

Rate Posts

No Ratings v ?

- If you wish to add date restrictions or release conditions specific to this topic, they can be enabled in the Restrictions tab.
- Once the desired settings are in place, hit the blue save button to make the topic active. The forum with multiple topics within will resemble the image below. Students can post by clicking the topic and selecting “Start a New Thread” and can reply to other Threads by clicking the thread and selecting “Reply to Thread”.

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Week 1 Discussion v Includes assessment. Please introduce yourself and let the class know what you are most looking forward to in this course.	3	3	Madiya Patriquin June 24 at 9:18 AM
Week 2 Discussion v Provide your thoughts on this week's content and identify any questions you may have.	0	0	
Week 3 Discussion v	0	0	

For information on grading discussions, see the following posts:

- Grading Discussion Topics: <https://edtechruro.edublogs.org/2020/08/30/grading-discussions-topics/>
- Grading Group Discussions: <https://edtechruro.edublogs.org/2016/03/03/grading-group-discussions/>