

USING DISCUSSION BOARDS TO SUPPORT LEARNING ONLINE

This guide covers the use of discussion boards for teaching online.

Discussion boards are a great tool for allowing staff and students to communicate and interact. They can be used for a variety of purposes, for example:

1. Asking general course questions, e.g. what reference style is required for the assignment
2. Sharing thoughts, ideas and reflections on topics, readings and activities
3. Sharing resources

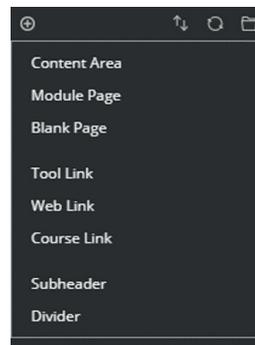
HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE DISCUSSION BOARD

You should use the discussion boards on our virtual learning environment, Vision.

Once inside your course, you may have to create a tool link to discussion boards on the left-hand course menu navigation.

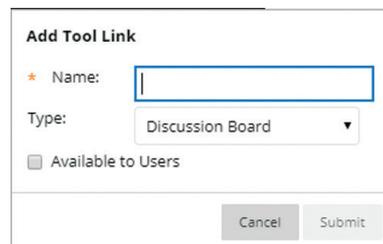
To make accessing your course discussion board as easy as possible, we recommend creating a **Tool link** on the course menu, the left-hand navigation on the course page.

STEP 1. On the left-hand navigation, hover over the **+** in the upper left corner.



STEP 2. Select **Tool link**

STEP 3. Write 'Discussion Board' in the name box and select **Discussion Board** in the drop-down menu below it



STEP 4. Ensure that you tick **Make available to users** option or your students will not be able to see the discussion board.

You should now be able to access your course discussion board on the left-hand menu.

HOW TO USE DISCUSSION BOARDS

Creating a forum

Forums are used within discussion boards to make it easier for students to navigate topics and know where it is appropriate to post.

When you first go into a discussion board no forums will have been created, so you will need to set these up.

You may want to create forums for different topics, units or assessments.

Discussion Board
Discussions are a good way to encourage students to think critically about your coursework and interact with each other's ideas. You can create discussions around individual course lessons or for your course in general. [More Help](#)

Create Forum Search

No items found.

FORUM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL POSTS	UNREAD POSTS	UNREAD REPLIES TO ME
Scholarship (LU1)	This forum contains the discussions on scholarship from LU1. It's also a place to share any other ideas or questions you have about scholarship, particularly scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).	14	0	0
Learning enhancement (LU1)	This forum contains the discussions on learning enhancement from LU1. It's also a place to post any questions or ideas about how to enhance learning and teaching.	24	14	0
Digital education / technology enhanced learning	This forum contains discussions from each of the learning units in relation to digital education and technology enhanced learning. Feel free to add any ideas, queries or resources that you have on these issues.	110	109	0
Induction	This forum provides space for discussions regarding induction, including introducing yourselves.	62	62	0
Questions about assessments	We've had feedback that the padlet isn't very accessible for someone people, so we're creating space here in the discussion boards for	25	25	0

TO CREATE A FORUM:

STEP 1. Click on **Create Forum**

STEP 2. Give your forum a name in the **Name** box.

STEP 3. Give a brief description about the purpose of this forum – what should students post here?

STEP 4. As you scroll down, there are a variety of options for the forum which are self-explanatory. You may want to allow students to edit their own published posts.

STEP 4. Once you are happy, press **Submit** in the lower right-hand corner.

Create Forum

FORUM INFORMATION

* Name

Description

Subscribe

Create and Edit

Cancel Submit

SUBSCRIBING TO A FORUM

You can subscribe to a forum to ensure that you get notified of any posts.

To subscribe to a forum:

STEP 1. Click on the name of the forum

STEP 2. Click on **Subscribe**

STEP 3. You will now receive an email when someone creates a new thread.

Delete

FORUM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL POSTS
Course questions	Post any general questions about the course - e.g. how to find a certain reading.	0

Forum: Course questions

Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be threads appears. [More Help](#)

Create Thread Subscribe

Success: Subscribed to Forum.

Forum: Course questions

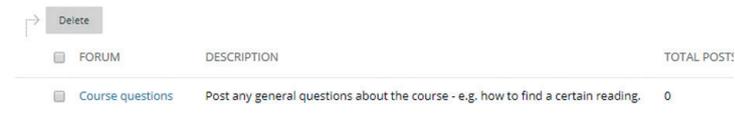
Forums are made up of individual discussion threads appears. [More Help](#)

Create Thread Unsubscribe

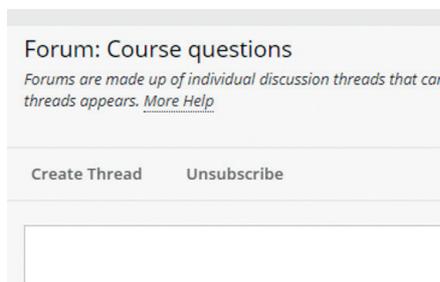
CREATING A THREAD

Threads are used to group together replies to an initial post, like having a conversation.

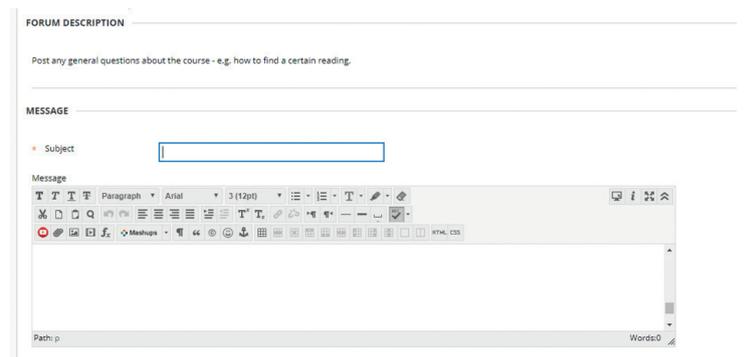
STEP 1. Click on the name of the forum



STEP 2. Once inside the forum, click on **Create thread**

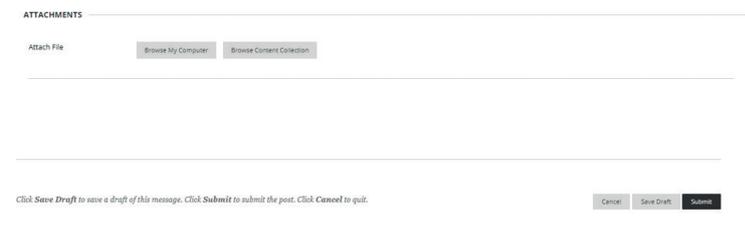


STEP 3. Fill in the information. Give your thread a fitting subject name, e.g. "Question about the essay" and write your message in the message box.



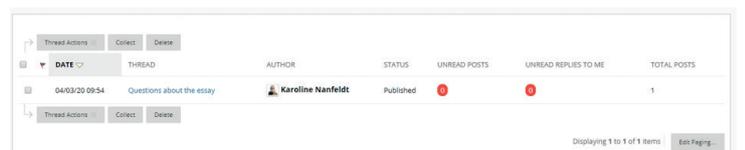
STEP 4. Anyone creating a thread can also read the forum description. When you create a new thread, you see the name of the forum and the forum description

STEP 5. You can attach any files that you would like. This could include screenshots or documents.



STEP 6. Once you are happy, press the black **Submit** button in the lower right-hand corner. You can also click on **Save Draft** if you want to come back and edit it later.

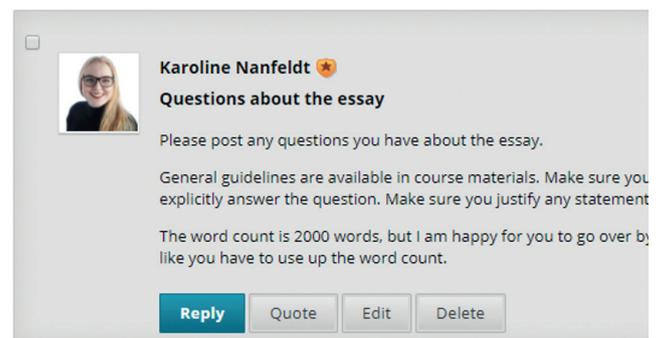
STEP 7. You can now see your thread.



REPLYING TO A THREAD

STEP 1. Click onto the thread you want to reply to

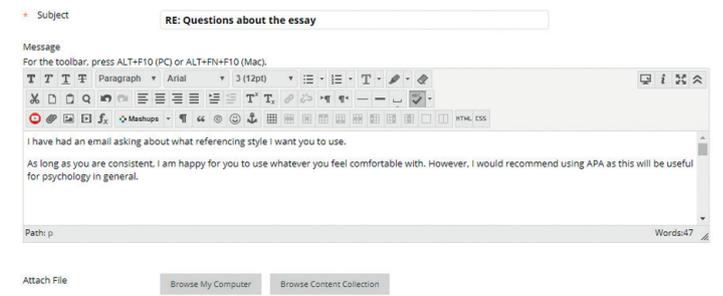
STEP 2. You will now see the original post with any replies. At the bottom of each thread, you will be able to see a reply button. It looks slightly different dependent on whether it is the first post or replies, but the options are the same.



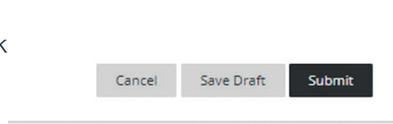
STEP 3. Click on reply.



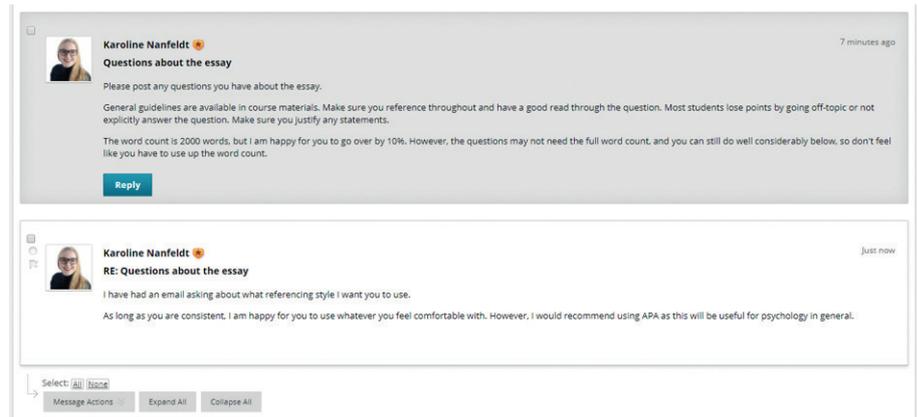
STEP 4. This will give you the option to edit the subject (by default it is RE: [Original subject]) and write message. You can also attach files.



STEP 5. Once you are happy with your reply, press the black **Submit** button in the lower right-hand corner or you can save a draft for later.



STEP 6. You can now see your reply and any other posts on the original thread.



NOTES

TOP TIPS

1. Subscribe to your course forums, so you get an email notifying you when people have posted. This will help you stay on top of discussions.
2. Encourage your students to post common questions on the discussion board, so you don't have to answer the same question on email several times.
3. Help facilitate discussions by creating threads and encourage your students to participate.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If you are unable to resolve the issue yourself please contact the IT Helpdesk at ISHelp@hw.ac.uk.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Further resources on discussion boards by Blackboard <https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Interact/Discussions>



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