

April 5, 2022

# Brightspace Instructor Guide

## **Discussion**



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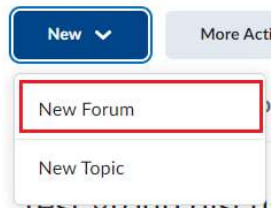
## Getting Started with Discussions

Use the Discussions tool in your course to encourage users to share thoughts on course material with their peers. You can set up forums and topics for users to ask questions, discuss course content and assignments, and work together in assigned groups and sections.

### Creating a Discussion Forum

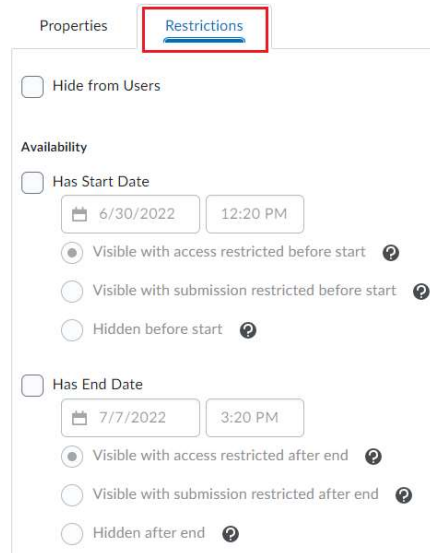
Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the **Navigation Bar** (navbar) of your course, click **Assessments** and select **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the **New** button drop-down menu, click **New Forum**.



3. Enter a title for your new forum.
4. Enter a description for your new forum, if desired.
5. In the **Options** section, select any of the following check boxes:
  - **Allow anonymous posts** - To enable users to post anonymously.
  - **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum** - To ensure that posts are approved by a moderator before they display in the forum.
  - **Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic** - To ensure user participation.
  - **Display forum descriptions in topics** - To provide instructors the option to display a discussion forum description within a discussion topic description.

6. In the **Restrictions** tab, you have the options to set Start and End Dates to limit when students can access the Forum and customize the extent of their access outside of those times:
- **Visible with access restricted before start / after end:** Students can see that the Forum exists but cannot see any of the Topics in it. Only the Forum title, Start/End Dates, and restrictions will be visible to the students.
  - **Visible with submission restricted before start / after end:** I.e., *read only*. Students can enter the Forum's Topics to view the description and attached rubrics and to read threads and replies. But they cannot post new threads or replies in the Topics.
  - **Hidden before start / after end:** Students will not be able to see that the Forum (or any Topic in it) exists, and it will not appear in the Calendar.



Properties **Restrictions**

Hide from Users

Availability

Has Start Date

6/30/2022 12:20 PM

Visible with access restricted before start ?

Visible with submission restricted before start ?

Hidden before start ?

Has End Date

7/7/2022 3:20 PM

Visible with access restricted after end ?

Visible with submission restricted after end ?

Hidden after end ?

**Note:** Forums are set to Visible with access restricted by default. You can change this default for your course by clicking on the Settings button at the top of the discussion page and adjusting the Availability condition Defaults.

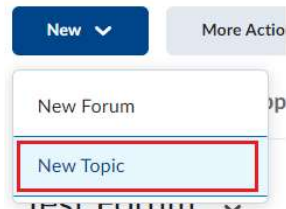
7. Click **Save and Close**.

You have now created a Discussion forum and need to [add at least one topic](#) in order for students to be able to post.

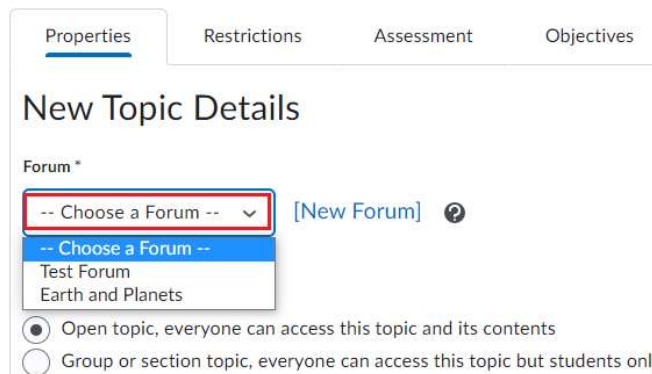
## Creating a Discussion Topic

Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the navbar of your course, click **Assessments** and select **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the **New** button, click **New Topic**.



3. From the drop-down list, select the forum you want to put your topic in. If you want to create a new forum for your topic, click **New Forum**.
4. To grant everyone access to the topic, under **Topic Type**, select **Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents**.



5. Enter your New Topic details like **Title** and **Description**.
6. Under *Options*, you can select one or more of the following settings:
  - **Allow anonymous posts** – Selecting this option allows users to post anonymously to the topic. Anonymous posts display with the author "Anonymous" in the thread.
  - **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic** – Selecting this option will require a moderator to approve posts in this topic before they display to users.

- **Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads** – Selecting this option will require a user to start a new thread in the topic before viewing or replying to other threads in the topic. If this topic requires post approval, users will not be able to view or reply to other threads until their thread is approved.
7. Under *Rate* posts, you have the option to enable post ratings for the discussion topic. You can choose from the following rating schemes:
- **No Ratings (Default)** hides all rating controls from users.
  - **Five-Star Rating Scheme** allows users to assign each post a score out of five.
  - **Up Vote/Down Vote Rating Scheme** allows users to increase or decrease a post's rating.
  - **Up Vote Only Rating Scheme** allows users to increase a post's rating.
8. On the **Restrictions** tab, you have the option to set Start and End Dates to limit when students can access the Topic and customize the extent of their access outside of those times:
- **Visible with access restricted before start / after end:** Students can see that the Topic exists but cannot enter it. Only the Topic title, Start/End Dates, and restrictions will be visible to the students.
  - **Visible with submission restricted before start / after end:** I.e., **read only**. Students can enter the Topic to view the description and attached rubrics and to read threads and replies. But they cannot post new threads or replies.
  - **Hidden before start / after end:** Students will not be able to see that the Topic exists, and it will not appear in the Calendar.

Properties **Restrictions** Assessment Objectives

Hide from Users

Availability

Has Start Date

Visible with access restricted before start ?

Visible with submission restricted before start ?

Hidden before start ?

Has End Date

Visible with access restricted after end ?

Visible with submission restricted after end ?

Hidden after end ?

Display In Calendar

Release Conditions

There are no conditions attached to this item.

**Note:** Forum availability restrictions take precedence over any availability restrictions set on Topics. As such, you can use this combination of access and visibility settings to provide students with general instructions for the Discussion activity in the Forum description prior to giving them access to the Topics and its specific instructions.

9. Click **Save and Close**.

## Group or Section Restricted Topics

You can restrict Topics by **Group** or **Section**. To do this you need to have your groups or sections set up before-hand.

1. Follow steps 1-3 above.
2. At step 4, select **Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads from their own group or section**.
3. Then, from the drop-down menu select the category of groups or section you would like the restrict the Topic to.

Note: You cannot edit the Topic Type once you save the topic. I.e., restricting a topic cannot be undone.

4. Continue with the instructions above to complete setting up the Topic.

## Creating a Thread

1. On the navbar of your course, click **Assessments** and select **Discussions**.
2. Click the topic where you want to create a thread.
3. Click **Start a New Thread**.



4. Enter a subject.
5. Enter your post in the HTML editor.
6. Set any of the following posting options:
  - To keep the thread at the top of the list, select **Pin Thread**.
  - To post anonymously (if this is set up), select **Post as Anonymous**.
  - To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread**.
  - To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area, click **Browse** to locate the file that you want to attach.
  - To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio > Record**. To make adjustments to your microphone selection and volume, click **Flash Settings**. To listen to your recording, click **Play**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. If you have pre-recorded audio and are using a supported browser, you can drag audio files onto the attachments upload target.
  - To attach a video recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Video > Allow > Record**. When you finish recording, click **Stop**. To



erase your recording, click **Clear**. To add the recording, click **Add**. If you have pre-recorded video and are using a supported browser, you can drag video files onto the attachments upload target.

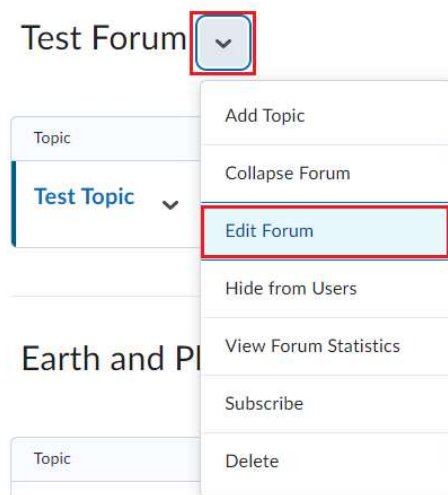
- To post your thread to more than one topic, click **Post to other topics**. Click **Add Topics**. Select the topics that you want your thread to appear in. To post in every topic simultaneously, select the **Select All** check box and then click **Add Topics**.

7. Click **Post**. If the topic is moderated, your post does not appear until a moderator approves it.

## Edit a Discussion Forum or Topic

Editing a discussion forum gives you the ability to change the forum name, availability and locking options, release conditions, and group and section restrictions. Editing a discussion topic gives you the ability to reassign the topic to a different forum, rename the topic, and change the availability and locking options, restrictions, assessment options, and associated learning objectives.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, click the context menu of the forum or topic you want to edit and click **Edit Forum** or **Edit Topic**.



3. Make your changes.
4. Click **Save and Close**.

## View a Discussion Topic

If you are viewing a topic from the Discussions tool:

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, click on the name of the discussion topic. The properties of the discussion topic related to availability, locking information, and any other details set by an instructor, are listed directly below the name of the discussion topic.
3. From the **Filter by** drop-down list, select an option, by which you can sort the individual discussion posts.

### Test Topic ▾

☆ [Subscribe](#)

Add a description ...

[Start a New Thread](#)



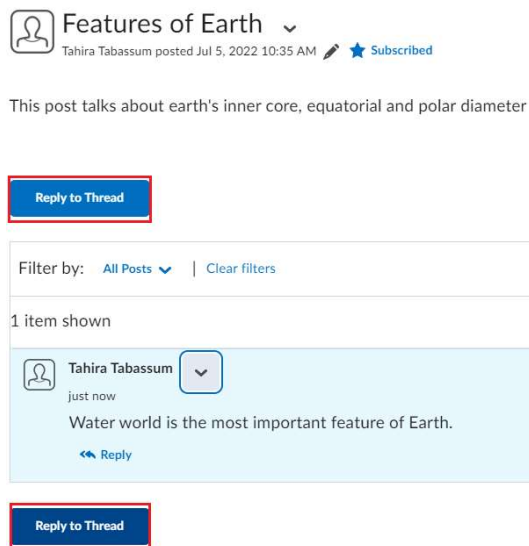
The screenshot shows a discussion topic titled "Test Topic". Below the title is a "Filter by:" dropdown menu. The dropdown is open, showing the current selection "All Threads" and two other options: "Unread" and "Flagged". The "Unread" and "Flagged" options are each preceded by an unchecked checkbox. Below the filter menu, the start of a discussion post is visible, with the text "test po" and "Demo Student" followed by a timestamp "22 11:28 AM".

If you are viewing a topic from the Content tool:

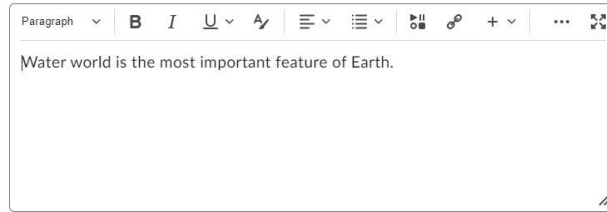
1. On the navbar, click **Content**.
2. Click on a module.
3. Click on the name of a discussion topic.  
Note: You cannot view the properties of the discussion topic when you view the topic using the Content tool.
4. From the **Filter by** drop-down list, select an option, by which you can sort the individual discussion posts.






## Reply to a Discussion Thread

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. Locate the thread you want to reply to.
3. Do either of the following:
  - a. To reply to the main thread post, click **Reply to Thread**.
  - b. To reply to a particular post inside the thread or click **Reply**.



4. Enter your reply in the HTML Editor. To include the original post's text in your reply, click the **Add original post text** link. (If this option is already enabled by your course administrator, this message will not display.)
5. Set any of the following options:
  - a. To post anonymously, select **Post as Anonymous**.
  - b. To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread**.
  - c. To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area, click **Browse** to locate the file you want to attach.



Paragraph **B** *I* U *A*     + ... 

Water world is the most important feature of Earth.

Subscribe to this thread

 Add Attachments

- d. To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio > Record**. To make adjustments to your microphone selection and volume, click **Flash Settings**. To listen to your recording, click **Play**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. If you have pre-recorded audio and are using a supported browser, you can drag audio files onto the attachments upload target.
  - e. To attach a video recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Video > Allow > Record**. When you finish recording, click **Stop**. Click **Clear** to erase your recording or **Add** to add the recording. If you have pre-recorded video and are using a supported browser, you can drag video files onto the attachments upload target.
6. Click **Post**.

## Post to a Group Discussion Topic

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, select a group discussion topic.
3. Click **Start a New Thread**.
4. From the **Post Thread to** drop-down list, select **All Groups**, or a specific group.
5. Provide a subject and enter your post in the HTML editor.
6. Set any of the following options:
  - a. To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread**.
  - b. To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area, click **Add attachments**, click **Upload**, and locate the file you want to attach.

- c. To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio > Record**. To adjust your microphone selection and volume, click **Flash Settings**. To listen to your recording, click **Play**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. If you have pre-recorded audio and are using a supported browser, you can drag audio files onto the attachments upload target.
- d. To add your post to other topics, click **Post to other topics**, and then **Add Topics**. Select the desired topics and click **Add Topics**.

7. Click **Post**.

Note: If you select the option to post to all groups, the Discussions tool creates a copy of the thread for each group to access and reply to.

## Restrict multiple forums or topics to specific groups or sections

After you have created groups or sections, you can restrict access to a forum or topic using your groups or sections. Restricting forums or topics enables you to create discussion areas where members of a group or section can collaborate on assignments or discuss course materials in small groups. You can also use create separate forums for specific groups or sections in a course offering.

1. Click **Group and Section Restrictions** from the tool navigation.

### Discussions

Discussions List   Subscriptions   **Group and Section Restrictions**   Statistics

2. Select your **View Options**.
3. In the **Edit Restrictions** area, select the **Restricted** check box for any forum or topic you want to restrict, then select the check box for any group or section you want to have access to the forum or topic. To open a forum or topic to everyone, clear the **Restricted** check box.

## Discussions

[Settings](#) [Help](#)

[Discussions List](#) [Subscriptions](#) [Group and Section Restrictions](#) [Statistics](#)

### View Options

Group or Section Category

Self Register Group

Forum

Earth and Planets

[Automatically create restricted topics](#)

### Edit Restrictions

Forums and Topics	Restricted?	Self Register Group			
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Earth and Planets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interesting facts about Earth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20 per page

Save

## Automatically create restricted topics for groups or sections

You can automatically create a discussion topic for each group or section in a selected category. To pick get their names from the group or section they associate with.

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. From the tool navigation, click **Group and Section Restrictions**.
3. Click the **Automatically create restricted topics** link.

[Course Home](#) [Content](#) [Assessments](#) [Grades](#) [Zoom](#) [Course Tools](#)

## Discussions

[Discussions List](#) [Subscriptions](#) [Group and Section Restrictions](#) [Statistics](#)

### View Options

Group or Section Category

Self Register Group

Forum

Earth and Planets

[Automatically create restricted topics](#)

### Edit Restrictions

4. Select a **Group or Section Category** and the **Forum** where you want to create your topics. If you want to create a new forum, click **New Forum**.
5. Click **Create**.

## Create Restricted Topics

A topic will automatically be created for each group or section in the group or section category selected.

The topics will be created under the forum that is selected. The name of each topic will be the name of the group or section category, followed by the name of the group or section. When the topics are created, each topic will be restricted to the group or section after which it was named.

Group or Section Category \*

Self Register Group ?

Forum \*

Earth and Planets [New Forum] ?

**Create** Cancel

## Best practices for Using Discussions

- **Ensure that there are discussion topics created for your discussion forum(s)**  
Forums are used to group topics into predetermined themes, course units, etc. You can only post in discussion topics. If there are no topics created for a forum, then students will not be able to participate in discussions. On the course home page, click **Discussions**. Make sure that there are topics nested under the discussion forum. If you do not see topics nested under the discussion forum(s), you must create topics.
- **Ensure that discussion forums and topics are not unintentionally hidden.**  
The option to hide a discussion forum or topic is located on the **Discussion List** page, in the context menu for each forum or topic. The **Hidden** icon appears beside any topics or forums that are currently hidden. Forums and topics can also be hidden on the **New Forum** or **New Topic** page (or the Edit page for existing forums and topics), in the **Restrictions** tab's **Availability** section. If you selected **Hide this [topic or forum]**, then learners cannot see it. If a discussion forum has this setting enabled, all of the topics nested under it are also hidden.
- **Ensure that there are no unwanted date restrictions set for the discussion forum or topic**  
Students cannot access topics that fall outside of set date restrictions. If a discussion forum has date restrictions attached, then all topics nested under it will be hidden outside of those date restrictions.

The option to set date restrictions is located on the New Forum or New Topic page (or the Edit page for existing forums and topics), in the **Restrictions** tab **Availability** section. Select the **Forum is visible for a specific date range** check box, then fill out your start and end dates. If you want the forum or topic to be currently visible, ensure that the End Date has not passed yet and the Start Date has already begun; if you want it to be available at a later time, set the date restrictions accordingly. If you do not want date restrictions enabled, select **[Forum/Topic] is always visible**.

- **Ensure that the appropriate group restriction settings are applied**  
If group restrictions are enabled for the discussion forum or topic, then only students within the group selected can see the discussion. The option to set group restrictions is located on the **New Forum** or **New Topic** page (or the **Edit** page for existing forums and topics), in the **Restrictions** tab of the **Group and Section Restrictions** section. Select **Restrict this forum to the following groups and sections** to enable group restrictions for a forum or topic.

## Moderating discussions

### About locking discussion forums and topics

Locking a topic prevents users from creating new posts or modifying existing posts, making the conversation read only. Users with permission can modify the contents of a locked topic. Locking a topic is an effective way of closing a conversation while allowing users to refer back to posts. Consider locking a topic to end a conversation, then using a pinned summary post inside the topic. When users access the topic, your summary appears at the top.

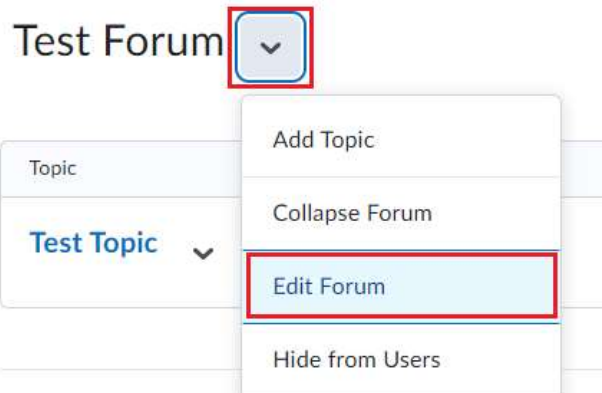
You can specify start and end dates for when a forum or topic unlocks so you can set things up ahead of time to match your course's calendar.

### Locking and/or hiding Discussion Forum and Topics

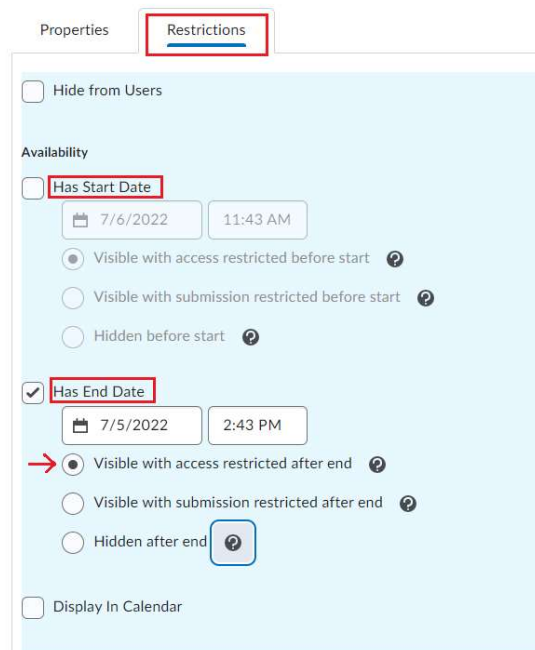
#### To lock a discussion forum or topic

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. From the context menu of the forum or topic you want to lock, click **Edit Forum**.





3. On the **Restrictions** tab, select your **Locking Options**.  
Edit Forum - Test Forum ▾



4. Click **Save**.

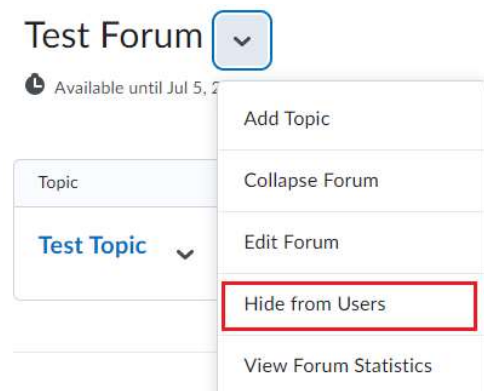
## About hidden discussion forums and topics

Hidden topics do not display on the Discussions List page, except to users with permission to see hidden forums and topics or to manage discussions. By hiding topics, you can control which topics users can access at different times throughout the course. For example, you can create weekly discussion topics for users to reflect on the material covered in each week of the course and make each topic available for one week only.

You can specify start and end dates for when a forum or topic is visible so you can set up visibility ahead of time to match your course's calendar. Instead of scheduling a topic to disappear as soon as you want the discussion to end, consider locking the topic at that point and keeping it visible for another few days. This allows users to review the discussion after it closes so that they don't miss the last posts added.

## Hide a discussion forum or topic

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. From the context menu of the forum or topic you want to hide, click **Hide from Users**.



## About moderated discussion topics

If a topic requires post approval or moderation, posts only appear to users with permission to approve them. You must manually approve these posts to make them visible to all users. Users with permission to approve posts in a topic can create approved posts automatically.

You can enable and disable post approval from the Properties tab when creating or editing a forum or topic. Once you enable post approval, a **⚠** Moderated notification appears beside the forum or topic name.

If a post is not appropriate for the topic and you do not want to approve it, you can do any of the following:

- Leave the post unapproved.
- Edit the post before approving it.
- Delete the post.

## Moderate discussions

You must manually approve posts and threads in topics that require approval. Once you approve a post or thread, it is visible to all users. To hide the post or thread, you must unapprove it.

## To moderate discussions

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.

### Discussions

Discussions List   Subscriptions   Group and Section Restrictions   Statistics

New ▾   More Actions ▾

Filter by: Unread   Unapproved

Test Forum ▾

Available until Jul 5, 2020. Availability ends.

Topic

Test Topic ▾

- Add Topic
- Collapse Forum
- Edit Forum**
- Hide from Users
- View Forum Statistics

### Edit Forum - Test Forum ▾

Properties   Restrictions

#### Edit Forum Details

Title\*

Test Forum

Description

Paragraph ▾   **B**   *I*   U   ~~A~~

Options

Allow anonymous posts ⓘ

Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic ⓘ

A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum ⓘ

Display forum description in topics ⓘ

**Save and Close**   Save and Add Topic   Save   Cancel

## Discussions

[Discussions List](#) Subscriptions Group and Section Restrictions

New ▾

More Actions ▾

Filter by: Unread Unapproved

Test Forum ▾

 Moderated.

Topic

Test Topic ▾

2. Do any of the following:

- a. Beside the post you want to approve, click the **Approve Post** link.
- b. From the context menu of the post you want to approve, click **Approve Post**.

[Discussions List](#) > [View Topic](#)

Test Topic ▾

 [Subscribe](#)

Add a description ...

[Start a New Thread](#)

Filter by: All Threads ▾

Test Topic ▾

Demo Student - 2 posts 4/16/2022 2:22 PM [Subscribe](#)

Test thread 2

0 0

Unread Replies

Test Topic

Demo Student - 1 post

Test thread 1

Edit Thread

Approve Thread

Mark All Posts as Read

Mark All Posts as Unread

Flag Thread

[Subscribe](#)

- c. To approve all posts in a thread, click **Approve All Replies in Thread**.

- d. From the context menu of the post you want to unapprove, click **Unapprove Post**.
- e. From the context menu of the thread you want to unapprove, click **Unapprove Thread**.

## Replying to Discussion Threads using Video Notes

# Assessing (grading) Discussions

### Assessment methods available for a discussion

Starting with Brightspace Learning Environment 20.19.09, any grades you enter in Grade Book for discussion grade items are also synchronized back to Discussions. This change ensures data consistency between Discussions and Grade Book.

**Note:** Currently, Discussion grades are not synchronized when the Discussion tool is updated by the Brightspace API or when Grade Book is exported and imported.

The following calculation methods are available to assess discussions.

<b>Calculation method</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Average post score	This calculation method averages all of the post scores included per user.
Maximum post score	This calculation method identifies the highest score of all the post scores included per user.
Minimum post score	This calculation method identifies the lowest score of all the post scores included per user.
Mode post score - Highest on multiple	This calculation method looks at the frequency of scores on posts, then selects the highest occurrence of a score per user. Once it picks the frequency, the system looks to see if multiple scores occur at that frequency. If not, it assigns that score to the user. If there are multiple scores with the same frequency, it will choose the highest of those scores. For example, if a score of 7 occurs 2 times, a score of 8 occurs 3 times, and a score of 9 occurs 3 times, the system will choose the frequency 3 and the score of 9.
Mode post score - Lowest on multiple	This calculation method looks at the frequency of scores on posts, then selects the highest occurrence of a score per user. Once it picks the frequency, the system looks to see if multiple scores occur at that frequency. If not, it assigns that score to the user. If there are multiple scores with the same frequency, it will choose the lowest of those scores. For example, if a score of 7 occurs 2 times, a score of 8 occurs 3

	times, and a score of 9 occurs 3 times, the system will choose the frequency 3 and the score of 8.
Sum of post scores	This calculation method sums up all the scores on posts within a topic.

## Configuring a topic assessment

1. On the navbar, click **Assessments > Discussions**.
2. From the context menu of the topic you want to configure for assessment, click **Edit Topic**.
3. In the **Assessment** tab, configure your topic for assessment by doing any of the following:
  - If you want your assessments to count toward the learner's Final Grade, and you want the learner to see their assessment score and feedback in the Grades tool, associate the topic to a numeric grade item. Use the **Grade Item** drop down list to attach an existing numeric grade item or click **New Grade Item** to create a new numeric grade item. Note that you can only associate numeric grade items with discussion topics.
  - Give the topic a **Score Out Of** to evaluate the overall score of the learner's contributions to the topic.
  - Click the **Add Rubric** button to attach one or more existing rubrics, or click the **Create Rubric in New Window** link to create a new rubric for the topic. You can assess one or more rubrics for each learner in the course, and learners can view completed, published rubrics in Class Progress, Grades, Content, Discussions, and User Progress.
  - If you want to score individual posts, select the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box, then select your calculation method to allow assessment of individual posts in the topic. When this check box is not selected, you can give a single overall score to the learner for their participation.
  - If you want to score all the posts within a topic, select the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box, and then select the **Sum of post scores** calculation method.
  - If you select **Allow assessment of individual posts**, the **Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero** check box becomes available. When you select this check box, the system automatically assigns a score of zero to individual posts that you have not yet evaluated, and the overall score for the learner is calculated from the score of all posts, including those not evaluated with a score of zero.

Selecting this check box does not affect the **Sum of post scores** option. If you do not select the **Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero** check box, posts without a score are ignored and do not factor into the overall score.

4. Click **Save and Close**.

Course Home Content Assessments ▾ Grades Zoom Course Tools ▾ Groups Awards

### Edit Topic - Test Topic ▾

Properties Restrictions **Assessment** Objectives

#### Assessment

Grade Item  
-- Choose a grade item -- ▾ [New Grade Item] ⓘ

Score Out Of  
 ⓘ

Rubrics  
[Add Rubric](#)  
No rubrics selected.  
[\[Create Rubric in New Window\]](#)

Posts  
 Allow assessment of individual posts ⓘ

Calculation  
-- Select a calculation method -- ▾  Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero ⓘ

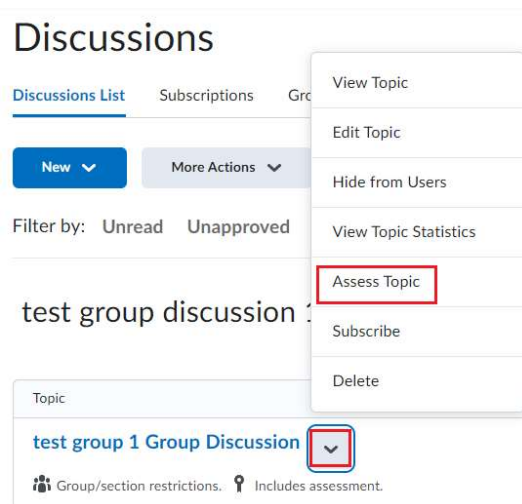
[Save and Close](#) [Save and New](#) [Save](#) [Cancel](#)

## Assessing Discussion Threads

You can assess learners' participation in discussion topics from within threads for topics to which you have added an assessment. In the **Assess Post** pop-up, you can view the post you are assessing, along with any attached rubrics and fields to add in personal feedback.

If your topic is moderated, you must approve posts before you can assess them. To assess individual posts, you must edit the topic to enable the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box in the **Assessment** tab.

1. From **Course Admin**, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, click the topic you want to assess.
3. Depending on your view settings, do one of the following:
  - In Reading view, instructors can assess an individual learner while viewing all of a learner's posts together on one screen. Click the context menu beside a thread name and select **Assess Student**.
  - In Grid view, instructors can select either the thread or reply for a post. Click the **More Actions** button and then select **Assess** to assess the individual learner.



4. In the popup dialog box, do any of the following:
  - If assessment of individual posts is enabled and you are in Reading View, enter a score in the **Score** column beside each post you want to assess. If assessment of individual posts is enabled and you are in Grid View, add the assessment in the **Post Score** field.



- If assessment of individual posts is not enabled, enter a score in the **Topic Score** field. This score is the assessment you are providing to the learner for participation in the topic.
  - Complete each rubric, choosing a level and entering feedback for each criterion. The Total calculates automatically based on the rubric criteria, or you can manually enter the Total and override the calculation. Note that the calculated or chosen Total is automatically populated in the **Topic Score** field. To return the Topic Score to the calculated score from the rubric, click **Clear Override**.
  - If learning outcomes are aligned to the discussion topic, using the scale defined by an administrator, assess the learner's progress against each learning outcome. For example, achievement levels might include the following: Does Not Meet Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectations. For more information, see [Assessing discussion threads against learning outcomes](#).
  - In the **General Feedback** field, enter feedback comments.
5. Click **Save Draft** to retain the assessment results and publish later. Click **Publish** to immediately release the assessment results to the learner in Assignments, Discussions, Grades, Content, and User Progress simultaneously.

## Assign scores to users from the Assess Topic Page

You can assess users from inside a discussion topic while reading posts, or from the **Assess Topic** page. When assessing users from the **Assess Topic** page, you can see topic scores for all users and view all of a user's posts together on one screen.

Assessable topics display an **Includes assessment** icon beside the topic name on the **Discussions List** page. If you select the **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic** setting, you must approve posts in the topic before you can assess them.

To assess individual posts, you must edit the topic to enable the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box in the **Assessments** tab.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. From the context menu of the topic you want to assess, click **Assess Topic**. If the **Score** column is empty on the **Assess Topic** page, click **Manage Columns**, select the **Score Value** check box, and click **Save**.
3. Do one of the following:

- In the **Users** tab, click **Topic Score** for the name of the user you want to assess.
  - In the **Assessments** tab, click the name of the user you want to assess.
4. In the **Topic Score Details** window, do any of the following:
- If **Allow assessment of individual posts** is enabled, enter a value in the **Score** column beside each post you want to assess.
  - If **Allow assessment of individual posts** is not enabled, assign a value in the **Topic Score** to reflect the learner's participation in the whole topic.
  - Complete each rubric with a level and feedback for each criterion.
  - In the **General Feedback** field, enter any comments that you have.
5. Click **Save Draft** to retain the assessment results and publish at a later time. Click **Publish** to immediately release the assessment results to the learner in Assignments, Discussions, Grades, Content, and User Progress simultaneously.

## Link a discussion assessment to a grade item

When you link a discussion topic's score to a numeric grade item in your grade book, your users' scores automatically transfer to the grade book. This enables you to factor the topic score into users' final grades for the course.

You must publish the score in order for Brightspace Learning Environment to update the grade item in the grade book. This prevents the display of inaccurate grades before you finish assessing users. When you publish the topic score, Brightspace Learning Environment updates the grade item in the grade book, and makes the grade visible to learners in Discussions, Content, and User Progress. Any additional changes you make to a user's score automatically updates in the grade book. Note that you can only link numeric grade items to discussion topics.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. From the context menu of the topic you want to assess, click **Assess Topic**.
3. On the **Assess Topic** page, do one of the following:
  - To publish scores for specific users, select the **Draft** check box in the **Status** column beside each user whose score you want to release. Click **Save**.
  - To publish scores for all users, click **Publish All Scores**. Click **Yes**.

## Displaying rubric scores on the Assess Topic Page

When the Assess with Embedded Rubrics feature is on, the View Options menu becomes available on the Assess Topic page.

The default option is Show Topic Score. This option displays only the Topic Score links. Rubrics and rubric scores do not appear on the Assess Topic page. This option provides a single list of topic scores that instructors can use for visual comparison across learners.

The Show All Scores option displays the learners' topic scores and rubric scores. This option provides the same view as when the Assess with Embedded Rubrics feature is disabled.

### Further Support

If you need further support with Brightspace, please contact the **Software and Application Support Centre** at [sas@smu.ca](mailto:sas@smu.ca).

**Regular hours:** Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM.

**Summer session hours:** Monday – Friday, 9AM – 4:30PM.