Discussion Board can be a powerful tool for building community with your students. This guide, which moves beyond the separate "Getting Started with Discussion Board" guide, is designed to help you accomplish that goal. Discussion Board contains such features as grading, flagging, moderating, email alerts and conducting "peer review".

USING THE MAIN ACTION BAR IN THE FORUM

> Add A New Thread (Thread)
> Delete Selected Thread(s) (Remove)
> Place All Selected Messages Into One (Collect)
> Prevent Selected Threads From Being Replied To (Lock)
> Remove Lock: Allow replies to selected threads (Unlock)
> Assign Students Point Scores (Grade Forum)

🖉 Students only have the Thread and Collect options on their action bar.

GRADING FORUMS OR THREADS

Depending on which option you chose when creating the forum, you can grade the whole forum or grade each thread separately.

Step 1: From the forum level (or the thread level), click **Grade Forum** (or **Grade Thread**).

Step 2: Click **Grade** .

Step 3: Enter the point score in the Grade text box, then click **Submit** then **OK** .

🖉 Disabling the grade option later (by modifying the forum settings) will wipe out any grades that had been entered.

RATING A POST

In addition to commenting on a post, students can rate the post on a five-star rating system. This provides a "peer review" option for the forum.

Step 1: From the Discussion Board page, add or modify the forum.

Blackboard Academic Suite 8.x

Step 2:   From the Forum Settings section, select **Allow Members to Rate Posts**.

Step 3:   Click ⬭Submit , then open the forum.

Step 4:   Open a thread and select a post (other than your own). The following is displayed on the right side of the post header:

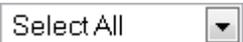**Step 5:**   Choose a rating from the pull-down menu, then click Rate .

🖉   This action is final – you cannot go back and change your rating!

PRINTING A LIST OF THREADS OR POSTS

Step 1:   Select the postings to be collected, by checking the box next to each.

🖉   To quickly select all, click GO next to Select All ▾ .

Step 2:   Click 📦 Collect .
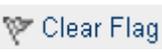
Step 3:   Click 🖨 Print .

FLAGGING POSTS

You or you students may wish to "flag" selected posts, perhaps for reviewing again at a later date.

Step 1:   Select the post(s) to be flagged, by checking the box next to it.

Step 2:   Click 🚩 Flag . The red flag symbol appears next to the posting.

🖉   To remove the flag, select the posting, then click 🚩 Clear Flag .

SORTING POSTS

By default, the messages are sorted by date. You can sort the messages by thread title, author, etc., by clicking on the triangle above the column heading.

SEARCHING A DISCUSSION BOARD FORUM

You can search for messages in a discussion board forum using the Search feature. This is particularly helpful if you need to find the responses written by one student. You can search at the discussion board, forum or thread level.

Step 1: Enter the text in the Search text box.

➤ You can specify a specific date range when the item was published by checking the boxes and indicating the dates.

➤ You can determine how broad the search will be by choosing a specific option from the *in* drop-down box (below the Search box).

Step 2: Click GO . The search results appear, sorted by author.

➤ Using the 🖨 Print button, you can print out the search results.

➤ Using the *Sort by* drop-down menu, you can change the sort order.

➤ Using the *Filter* drop-down menus, you can limit the display to show only a specific author and/or status of post.

Step 3: Click OK to close the search results and return.

CHANGING THE STATUS OF THREADS

By default, posts in threads are "published," which means they are immediately available and visible to the group and can be modified or rated (if enabled). If needed, the instructor can change threads from "published" to a different status:
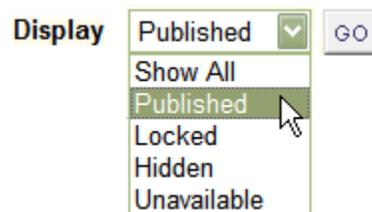

➤ Hide selected thread(s) from view – unless the student decides to display (Hidden)
➤ Make selected thread(s) unavailable – student (Unavailable)

The message under the Status column changes to the status you selected (Hidden or Unavailable).

FILTERING THREADS

You and your students can limit the display of threads in the following ways:

> ➢ Show all status type (Show All)
> ➢ Show only thread(s) locked by instructor (Locked)
> ➢ Show only thread(s) hidden by instructor (Hidden)
> ➢ Show only thread(s) hidden by instructor (Unavailable)
>   [Option not available to students]

PREVENTING CHANGES IN THREAD CONTENT

After students have submitted their threads/posts, you can make them "read-only"; additions, deletions and modifications cannot be made to the thread contents by anyone.

Step 1: Select the thread(s) to be locked, by checking the box next to it.

Step 2: Click 🔒 Lock . The message under the Status column changes to "Locked" for that thread.

> ➢ To remove a lock, use the same steps, but click 🔓 Unlock .

MODERATING A FORUM

As described above, submissions made by the group are, by default, are immediately published. However, you have the option of controlling the flow of this publishing by turning on a moderator setting when creating or modifying the forum. This lets you review submissions before they go public.

Step 1: From the Discussion Board page, add or modify a forum.

Step 2: From the Forum Settings section, select **Force moderation of posts**.
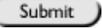
Step 3: Click Submit . Any submission made after enabling this setting will not be published automatically. New threads submitted do not display and new posts display the text, *(Moderation Queue)* next to them.

Step 4: From either the forum level or within a specific thread, click Moderate Forum . A list of "quarantined" threads and posts appear.

Step 5: Click Moderate to the right of an item. The contents of the post appear, along with the option to either publish or return the message, with the option of sending a private message back to the student.

Step 6: After choosing the desired option, click Submit . The item is removed from the moderation queue page.

BEING ALERTED TO NEW SUBMISSIONS

You or your students can be alerted, via email, to new submissions to a forum.

Step 1: From the Discussion Board page, add or modify a forum.

Step 2: From the Forum Settings section, select **Force moderation of posts**.

Step 3: Click Submit . All group members now have the option of subscribing to selected posts.

Step 4: To subscribe to a post, click Subscribe . Any time, a reply is submitted to this post, you'll receive an email alerting you to the new post and providing a convenient link to that page where the post appears.

"ADD FORUM" SETTINGS

Setting	Remarks	Default Selection
Allow anonymous posts	Useful when discussing sensitive topics.	Off
Allow author to remove OR modify own posts	Gives students ability to change their minds.	Off
Allow file attachments	A single file (text, spreadsheet, etc.) can be uploaded to a thread or post. (Setting affects both instructor and students.)	On
Allow members to create new threads	By turning this setting off, you could divide the discussion into subtopics, for example; students would only reply to your threads.	On
Allow members to subscribe to threads	Receive email alerts when a new thread or post is added to the forum.	Off
Allow members to rate posts	This is based on a five star system. (Setting affects both instructor and students.)	Off
Force moderation of posts	If enabled, you must review posts before they are "published" (made public). This responsibility could be delegated to a student. When a student submits a post, "(moderation queue)" appears after the post title. For the instructor, a Moderate Forum button is added to the action bar, where you can decide whether to "publish" to the group or "return" the post to the student with a private message explaining why.	Off
Grade forum OR threads	If forum is chosen, then set the possible points. If "threads" is chosen, then the possible points are set when each thread is created. In either case, scores can be recorded within the forum (and added automatically to the gradebook) and students can see their score(s) within the forum as well (?? only shows in My Grades).	Off