

The Discussion Board feature of Blackboard allows for communication and collaboration between students and instructor. Blackboard's discussion board can be customized by the instructor, the most basic being addition of a forum. This tutorial covers how to create and modify a forum.

Accessing a Discussion Board to Create a Forum

1. Log into your course using your instructor username and password.
2. To manage a discussion board available to your whole class, click on **Discussion Board** in the Course Menu.



Note: to add a forum to a **Group Discussion Board**, you will need to locate the discussion board via a different path, by clicking **Control Panel** from the main course menu, then clicking **Discussion Board** under Course Tools, and finally

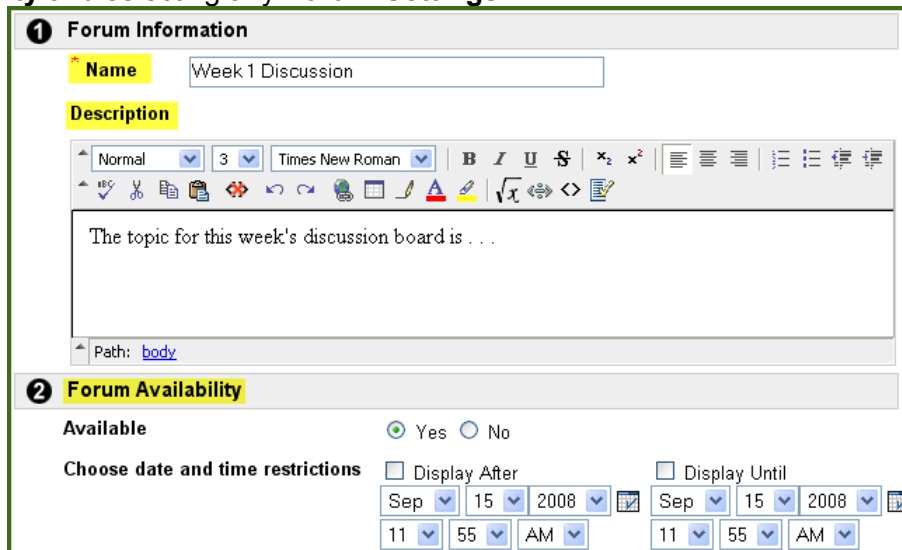
clicking on the title of the group discussion board you wish to add a forum to.

Adding a Forum

3. On the Discussion Board Page, click the **+Forum** button.



4. Fill out the **Forum Information** form provided, by giving your forum a **Name**, providing forum instructions to your students through the **Description** textbox, inputting **Forum Availability** and selecting any **Forum Settings**.



3 Forum Settings

- Allow anonymous posts**
- Allow author to remove own posts**
 - All posts
 - Only posts with no replies
- Allow author to modify own published posts**
- Allow post tagging**
- Allow users to reply with quote**
- Allow file attachments**
- Allow members to create new threads**
- Subscribe**
 - Do not allow subscriptions
 - Allow members to subscribe to threads
 - Allow members to subscribe to forum
 - Include body of post in the email
 - Include link to post
- Allow members to rate posts**
- Force moderation of posts**
- Grade**
 - No grading in forum
 - Grade Forum:** Points possible:
 - Grade threads**

4 Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

* Required Field

Note that Forum Settings include:

- **Allow anonymous posts** – where students can choose to not have their names associated with their posts.
- **Allow author to remove own posts** – this allows the author of a post to remove their message under the specified circumstances (**All posts** or **Only posts with no replies**).
- **Allow author to modify own published posts** – this allows the original author of a post to modify their post after it has been submitted.
- **Allow post tagging** – this allows posts to be tagged with category labels for sorting and filtering of posts.
- **Allow users to reply with quote** – the post Reply function has been enhanced to allow optional quoting of the previous post if this setting is selected.
- **Allow file attachments** – this option allows users to add files to their posts. Currently .docx and .pptx files from Office 2007 will not attach to discussion boards in Blackboard.
- **Allow members to create new threads** – select this if you want student users to be able to create new discussion board threads or topics.
- **Subscribe**- if selected, this option allows users to get email notification when a new post has been added to a thread.
- **Allow members to rate posts** – select this option if you want students to rate one another's posts using a 5 star system. This is helpful when collaborating or using peer feedback.
- **Force moderation of posts**- this setting requires a moderator to filter all posts before they are made public on the discussion board. Use this option if a discussion board is highly sensitive.

- **Grade** – selecting this option allows the instructor to grade a Forum directly from the forum view. A column is created in the Grade Center for each graded forum.

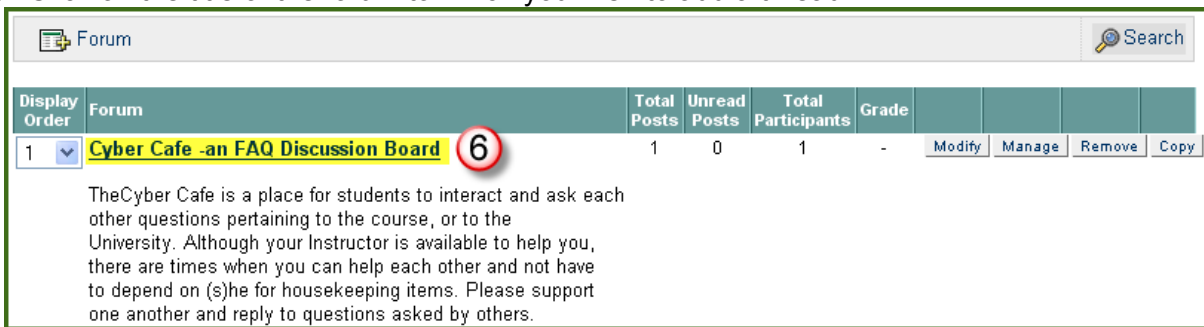
Once you have input the appropriate information, click **Submit** to create the new forum.

Posting a Forum Thread

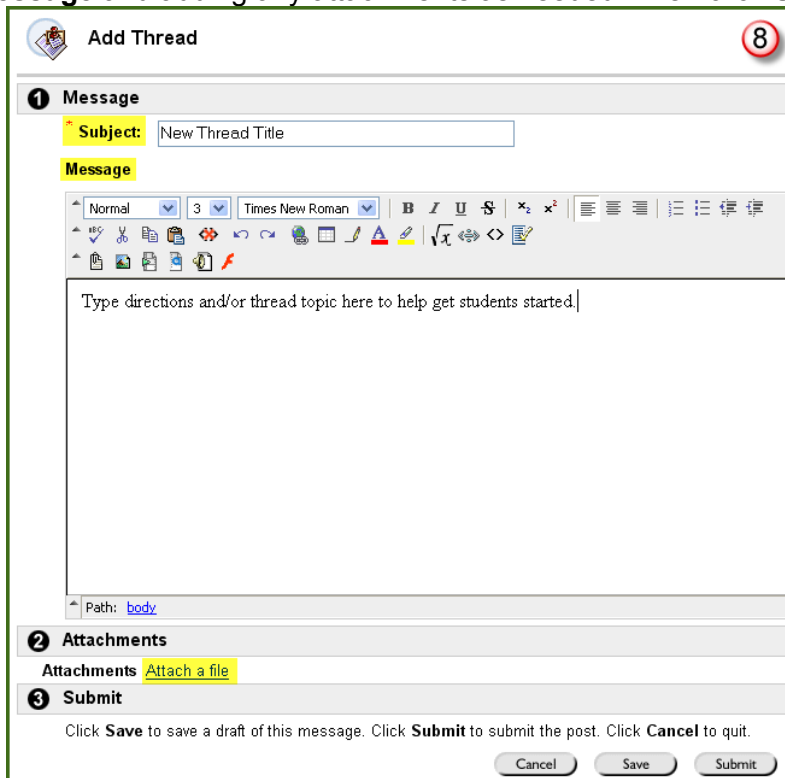
It is recommended that the instructor post an initial forum thread as part of the forum-creation process. This post often reiterates and forum directions and/or topics to be discussed, and allows students to begin posting by replying to the instructor’s thread.

To post a forum thread:

5. Navigate to the **Forum** view in Blackboard (see Steps 1 and 2 above)
6. Click on the title of the forum to which you wish to add a thread.



7. Click the **+Thread** button.
8. Fill out the **Add Thread** form that appears by providing a **Subject, Message** and adding any attachments as needed. Then click **Submit**.



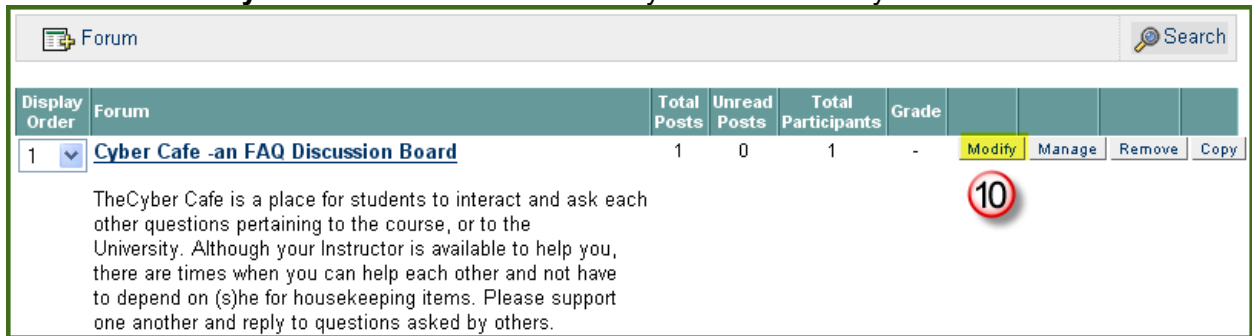
The new thread should now appear in the list of forum threads.

Modifying a Forum

Once a Forum has been created, it can be modified as needed. Modifications can include changes to the title and description, changes to the participant settings and changes to the availability settings.

To modify a forum, follow these steps:

9. Navigate to the **Forum** view in Blackboard (see Steps 1 and 2 above)
10. Click on the **Modify** button for the forum to which you wish to modify.



The screenshot shows the Blackboard Forum interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a 'Forum' header. Below this is a table with the following columns: Display Order, Forum, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Total Participants, and Grade. The first row in the table is for a forum titled 'Cyber Cafe -an FAQ Discussion Board', with 1 total post, 0 unread posts, 1 total participant, and a grade of '-'. To the right of the table, there are four buttons: 'Modify', 'Manage', 'Remove', and 'Copy'. The 'Modify' button is highlighted in yellow and circled with a red '10'. Below the table, the forum's description is visible: 'TheCyber Cafe is a place for students to interact and ask each other questions pertaining to the course, or to the University. Although your Instructor is available to help you, there are times when you can help each other and not have to depend on (s)he for housekeeping items. Please support one another and reply to questions asked by others.'

11. Modify any **Forum Information** as needed. The Forum Information available for modification is exactly as listed for Step 4 above.

For more information . . .

Additional support for Blackboard tools can be found at <http://esupport.wilmu.edu>, by clicking on the Help! button in Blackboard, at <http://www.wilmu.edu/instructionaltech/index.aspx> and in the User Manual linked from the *Control Panel* in Blackboard.