

# Oncourse CL : Discussion Forums

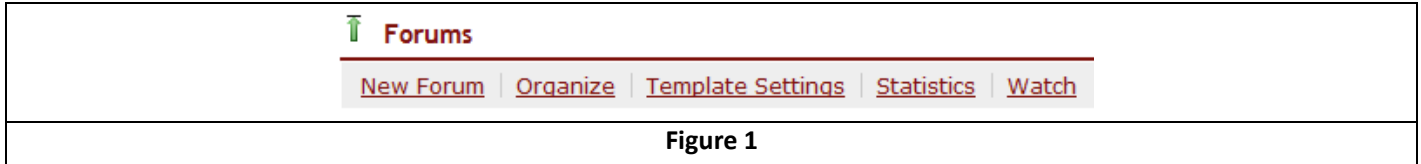
Forums provide a place for site members to post inquiry questions or other topics to which participants can respond.

## Creating a Forum

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In a recent change, the Forums tool supplies a site with a forum and topic for immediate use. All other forums, by default, can only be created by course instructors or project site owners. The forums tool provides shared space for a whole class or a subset of the class to share discussions, without depending on all participants being logged in at the same time.

1. In the list of tools to the left, **Click Forums**. The tool function links are:



2. At the top of the screen, from the tool function links, **Click New Forum**.
3. In the **Forum title field**, **enter your forum's title**. This field is limited to 75 characters.
4. In the **Short Description** (limited to 255 characters) or **Description** fields, you may provide a description.
5. In the **Attachments** field, you can attach a file from your local computer or from Resources, or specify a URL for a file on the web.
6. To ensure new messages can be posted to the new forum, **Click the No radio button next to Lock Forum (disable forum postings)**.
7. To moderate forum postings, **Click the Yes radio button for Moderate Topics in Forum**.
8. The **Permissions** section allows you to set Permissions for the discussion forum and all associated topics. These settings control what different individuals can see or do in the tool depending on their role. Anyone you designate will have the chance to read and screen each student's forum postings before they are released to the rest of the class or group.
9. Set permissions for each role as desired.
10. You may **link** a forum directly to a **specific gradebook item** if you have **Gradebook** items created in advance.
11. **Click Save Settings & Add Topic**.  
You will see the Topic Setting screen where you can add a topic.

## Creating Topics within a Forum

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Topics within forums are where students can post responses.

1. **Enter a Topic Title** and fill out the rest of the form.  
*Note: If you want to create new topic under an existing forum, **Click New Topic** to the right of the Forum title.*
2. **Click Save Settings**, or to add another topic, **Click Save Settings & Add Topic**.

## Organizing Discussion Forum Topics

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By default, as new topics are added in each forum, they are added to the top of the list. You may want to re-arrange your topics so they appear in a different order.

1. To access the organization feature, from the tool function links at the top of the screen, **Click Organize**.
2. To rearrange the topics, in the **drop-down box** next to a topic, **change the order value**.
3. **Click Save Settings**.

## Posting a Message

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You may want to Post a message to help get a discussion started.

1. **Click on the Topic title**.
2. **Click Post New Thread**.
3. **Enter a Message title**, and fill out the rest of the form.
4. **Click Post Message**.

## Viewing Messages

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You can read through messages posted inside the Forums tool. It is also possible to print messages that have been posted.

1. **Click on the title of the topic** within a forum.
2. **Click the title of the message**.  
*Note: An instructor can sort and display postings by an individual by clicking on the Statistics tool link.*