LEARN.UQ
DISCUSSION
BOARDS

Trainer: Ailsa Dickie (ITS)
# Table of Contents

Overview .................................................................................................................. 6  
  Discussion board components .................................................................................. 6  
  Post first .................................................................................................................. 6  
  Threads versus Replies ............................................................................................ 6  
  Course versus Group discussion boards .................................................................. 7  
Create a forum (marked) .......................................................................................... 8  
  Marking options ...................................................................................................... 8  
  Forum information ................................................................................................... 9  
Forum Availability ................................................................................................... 10  
  Available ................................................................................................................. 10  
  Enter Date and Time Restrictions .......................................................................... 10  
Forum Settings ......................................................................................................... 10  
  Viewing Threads/Replies ....................................................................................... 10  
  Grade ...................................................................................................................... 11  
  Grade Discussion Forum (if selected) ..................................................................... 11  
  Rubric options (if used) ....................................................................................... 12  
  Subscribe ............................................................................................................... 12  
  Create and Edit ...................................................................................................... 13  
  Additional Options ................................................................................................. 13  
  Submit ................................................................................................................... 14  
Create a Thread .......................................................................................................... 14  
  Select forum .......................................................................................................... 14  
Create a thread ......................................................................................................... 14  
  Forum message ...................................................................................................... 15  
  Message ................................................................................................................. 15  
  Attachments .......................................................................................................... 15  
  Grading .................................................................................................................. 15  
  Rubric options (if used) ...................................................................................... 16  
  Submit .................................................................................................................... 17  
Edit a thread ............................................................................................................. 17  
Change a thread so it can be marked ..................................................................... 17  
Post a Reply ............................................................................................................. 18  
  Select forum .......................................................................................................... 18  
  Select Thread/s ...................................................................................................... 18  
Reply ........................................................................................................................ 19  
  Individual thread ................................................................................................... 19
Collection of threads .......................................................... 19
Navigate a discussion board ................................................. 20
Enter a forum ................................................................. 20
View thread ................................................................. 20
Collect threads .............................................................. 21
Collapse All replies (posts) ............................................... 22
Expand All replies (posts) .................................................. 22
Collapse individual replies (posts) ....................................... 23
Expand individual replies (posts) ......................................... 23
Breadcrumbs ..................................................................... 23
Edit, copy and delete a forum .............................................. 24
Access the forum ............................................................. 24
Edit a forum .................................................................... 24
Copy a forum ................................................................. 24
Delete a forum .................................................................. 26
Delete threads and delete/edit replies (including students) .... 26
Delete threads .................................................................. 26
Edit student replies (posts) .................................................. 27
Delete student replies (posts) .............................................. 27
Mark a forum .................................................................... 28
Hide Grade Centre column ................................................ 28
Grade Discussion Forum ................................................... 29
Grade Forum .................................................................... 30
  Spell check (Optional) .................................................... 30
  Text Editor (Optional) .................................................... 31
Grade using a rubric .......................................................... 31
Next student ..................................................................... 33
Grade Centre .................................................................... 34
  Return student marks and feedback ................................. 34
Mark a thread .................................................................... 34
Hide Grade Centre column ................................................ 34
Grade Discussion Forum ................................................... 35
Grade Thread .................................................................... 36
  Spell check (Optional) .................................................... 36
Text Editor (Optional) ................................................................. 37
Grade using a rubric .................................................................. 37
Next student .............................................................................. 39
Grade Centre .............................................................................. 40
  Return student marks and feedback ........................................ 40
Using the Become Student tool .................................................. 40
  Making your course available .................................................. 40
  Set Availability ........................................................................ 41
Adding dummy students ............................................................ 42
Using the Become student tool .................................................. 43
  Viewing the course as a student .............................................. 43
  Return to instructor view ......................................................... 43
Create a group discussion boards .............................................. 44
  Access groups ....................................................................... 44
  Allocate discussion boards to a set of groups .......................... 44
  Allocate a discussion board to an individual group ................ 46
Further Resources ...................................................................... 48
  Technical Support .................................................................... 48
  Faculty Educational Designers ................................................. 48
  Technical Resources ............................................................... 48
eLearning Blog ........................................................................ 48
UQ eLearning Twitter .................................................................. 49
Pedagogical Resources ............................................................. 49
Student Resources ................................................................... 49
ITS Workshops .......................................................................... 49
TEDI Workshops ....................................................................... 49
Custom Workshops ................................................................... 49
Overview

Discussion board components

A discussion board consists of:

- **Forums**: Used to divide your Discussion board into main topics to make it easier to use and navigate. i.e. An assignment questions forum and/or a tutorial readings forum. Students can only create forums (depending on the set up) in Group discussion boards (see below).
- **Threads**: Questions or subtopics. i.e. A thread may be a question on a particular reading at all students answer or a question from a student on an assignment. When creating a forum you set whether student can or cannot create threads.
- **Replies (or posts)**: Answer to a thread (question or subtopic) or another reply.

**Post first**

Forums can be setup as **post first**, so students must create a thread before they can view the contents of the forum. You may decide to use this option so student have to write their own response to a question before reading and responding to the responses of other students.

*Instructions displayed to students when entering a “Post First” forum:*

*Threads versus Replies*

Threads in a forum are displayed as links as shown below. They are more difficult to navigate as the links need to be opened individually or collected to view all at once. For easier navigation, consider creating threads as sub topics that all students reply to instead of having them create threads.

*Note:* If you are using **Post first** the only option is for student to answer using threads.
A forum setup so students ask assignment questions using a thread:

Course versus Group discussion boards

The course discussion board by default is available to all students. In large groups you may wish to assign different discussion boards to different student groups. This can be done by making the discussion board available in existing groups i.e. SI-net tutorial groups, SI-net practical groups or project groups. You could also set groups specifically to allocate them a discussion board. (Refer p45).
**Note:** The group discussion board can be setup to allow or not allow student members to create forums.

**Student view of a course with group discussion boards:**

![Image of group discussion boards]

- Course discussion board - all students
- Group discussion board - student group members and staff

**Note:** Students cannot view or contribute to group discussion boards of which they are not members.

**Create a forum (marked)**

Use forums to organise your discussion board into main topic areas i.e. A forum for assignment questions and a forum for tutorial reading responses.

**Marking options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Set up</th>
<th>Marking set up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall mark for contributions to discussions (i.e. for the semester).</td>
<td>Create a forum. Use threads to divide the discussion into sub topics if needed. Decide if you will select to allow students to create threads (when you create the forum).</td>
<td>Select Grade Discussion Forum when creating the forum. A column is automatically created in the Grade Centre for the forum mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual marks for different discussion / responses (i.e. a mark per week)</td>
<td>Create a forum. Create a separate thread for each item you wish to mark.</td>
<td>Select Grade Threads when creating the forum. Select Grade Thread when creating each thread. A column is automatically created in the Grade Centre for each thread mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity type</td>
<td>Set up</td>
<td>Marking set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual marks for different discussion / responses (i.e. a mark per week)</td>
<td>Create a forum for each discussion / response you wish to mark. Select Post first.</td>
<td>Select Grade Discussion Forum when creating each forum. A column is automatically created in the Grade Centre for each forum mark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Forum information**

- From the **Course menu** select **Discussion board**.
- Click on the (Create Forum) button.

- Enter an informative title for the forum in the **Name** textbox.
- Enter instructions for the forum in **Description** textbox.
Tip: If the forum is set up as Post first (Students need to create a thread in order to view other threads in the forum) include this information in the description.

Tip: Include a link to the AskIT guide for students on using the discussion board. http://www.library.uq.edu.au/ask-it/discussion-boards

Forum Availability

Tip: You may wish to limit the time a forum is visible to students. i.e. for an assignment specific forum.

Available
- Select the required radio button.

Enter Date and Time Restrictions
To restrict when the forum link is available to students:
- If required, select the Display After checkbox and enter the date using the (Date Selection Calendar) and enter the time using the (Time Selection Menu).
- If required, select the Display Until checkbox and enter the date using the (Date Selection Calendar) and enter the time using the (Time Selection Menu).

Note: If you set the forum to Available = No this will override any date and time restrictions.

2. Forum Availability

If links to this forum exist and are hidden, the forum itself may be hidden, even if this setting is set to 'Yes'.

Available
- Yes
- No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions
- Display After 02/09/2013 09:00
- Display Until 07/09/2013 23:59

Forum Settings

Viewing Threads/Replies
- Select the required radio button:
  - Standard View: Students can enter and view all threads and replies.
  - Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum: Student will not be able to enter the discussion board until they post their own thread.

Note: Selecting Participants must a thread will by automatically select the other forum settings needed.
Grade

- Select the required radio button:
  - No Grading in Forum: If you do not wish to mark the discussion.
  - Grade Discussion Forum: Allows you to give an overall mark for forum contributions from a student.
  - Grade Threads: When you create a thread in the forum you have the option to grade it. i.e. Mark replies to individual questions.

Which option should I use?

Refer to the table at the beginning of the guide.

Grade Discussion Forum (if selected)

- Optionally, select the Due Date checkbox and enter the date using the (Date Selection Calendar) and enter the time using the (Time Selection Menu).
- Enter the mark the Discussion Board will be marked out of in the Points possible textbox OR
- Click on the (Add Rubric) button.
- Select Select Rubric from the drop down menu.

- Select the check box of the required rubric.
- Click on the (Submit) button.
Click on the **OK** (OK) button to assign the rubric marks as the **Points Possible**.

**Rubric options (if used)**

- **(Delete)** button to remove the rubric from the discussion board.
- **(View)** button to display the rubric (as it will be displayed to students).
- **(Edit)** button to make changes to the rubric.
- Use for Grading OR Use for Secondary Evaluation (Select the secondary evaluation if you have set up a **No Points** rubric).
- **Show rubrics to students**
  - **No** – default
  - **Yes (With Rubric Scores)** – recommended
  - **Yes (Without Rubric Scores)**
  - **After grading**

**Subscribe**

Selecting subscribe, allows students the option to select to receive an email every time something is added to the forum / thread. If you select to also include the body of the post in the email, students will also receive the content posted.

- Select the required radio button:
  - **Do not allow subscriptions**
  - **Allow members to subscribe to threads**
  - **Allow members to subscribe to forum** - recommended
    - Include body of post in the email – recommended
    - Include link to post
Create and Edit

- **Allow Anonymous Posts**: In most cases this would not be selected to ensure appropriate use of the forum.

*Tip*: Anonymous posts may be useful in some cases if students are reluctant to post questions.

- **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts**
  - All posts
  - Only posts with no replies

- **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts**

*Note*: You may not wish to allow both of these options to force student to take care with the content they are publishing.

- **Allow Authors to Create New Threads**: Use this option if you want students to be able to post new questions.

- **Allow File Attachments**: Useful in most cases as it allows students to link resources.

- **Allow Users to Reply with Quotes**: Useful in most cases as it allows students to quote the content of another student’s post.

- **Force Moderation of Posts**: Posts are not shown unless approved by a moderator (instructor). Choosing this option can be very work intensive. It is recommended that you set guidelines for post contents instead.

**Additional Options**

- **Allow Post Tagging**: Instructors can create and apply text labels of their own choosing to messages in a Forum; other Discussion Board users can read, filter and search messages using the tags but cannot create new ones. Tags allow arbitrary messages groupings independent of thread or thread status.

- **Allow Members to Rate posts**: May be used as peer assessment or voting tool.
Submit

- Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.

Create a Thread

Threads are questions that can be setup for staff and students to answer in a forum. Depending on how you setup the Forum students may or may not be able to create threads.

Select forum

- From the **Course menu** select **Discussion board**.
- Click on the required forum link

Create a thread

- Click on the **Create Thread** (Create Thread) button.
Forum message
Refer to p25 on instructions on how to change the contents of the forum message.

1. Forum Description
Weekly tutorial reading questions will be posted here. This forum has been setup as Post first i.e. You will need to post your own response to the tutorial question before you will be able to view other students posts.
An overall participant mark for the Semester will be awarded, check the EOP for details.

Message
- Enter an informative title for the thread in the Subject textbox.
- Enter instructions for the thread in Message textbox.

2. Message
Week 2 Readings response

Attachments
- Optionally, if you want to attach a file:
  - Click on the (Browse My Computer) and browse to and open the require file OR
  - Click on the (Browse Course) and select the radio button of the required file.

Grading
This option will only be displayed if you selected to Grade Threads when setting up the forum. Optionally, if you want to mark the thread select the Grade Thread checkbox.
- Optionally, select the Due Date checkbox and enter the date using the (Date Selection Calendar) and enter the time using the (Time Selection Menu).
- Enter the mark thread will be marked out of in the Points possible textbox.
Select the check box of the required rubric.

Click on the Submit (Submit) button.

Click on the OK (OK) button to assign the rubric marks as the **Points Possible**.

**Rubric options (if used)**

- [ ] (Delete) button to remove the rubric from the discussion board.
- [ ] (View) button to display the rubric (as it will be displayed to students).
- [ ] (Edit) button to make changes to the rubric.

- Use for Grading OR Use for Secondary Evaluation (Select the secondary evaluation if you have set up a *No Points* rubric).
- [ ] Show rubrics to students
  - **No** – default
  - **Yes (With Rubric Scores)** – recommended
  - **Yes (Without Rubric Scores)**
  - **After grading**
Submit

- Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.

Edit a thread

It is not possible to edit a thread after it has been created, it is only possible to delete it.

Change a thread so it can be marked

- First change the forum settings so **Grade Thread** is selected (refer p25).
- From the **Course Menu** select **Discussion Board**.
- Click on the required forum link.
- Click on the **Grade** (Grade) button of the required thread.
  
  - Enter the mark, the thread will be marked out of in the **Points possible** textbox.
  - Optionally, add a rubric.

- Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.
Post a Reply

Replies (or posts) are used by staff and students to answer questions/responses in threads. Both staff and students can reply to threads.

Select forum

- From the Course menu select Discussion board.
- Click on the required forum link

Select Thread/s

- Click on the required thread OR
- Check the checkbox next to the Date column title and click on the (Collect) button.
Reply

- Click on the **Reply** link.

**Individual thread**

- Click on the (expand/collapse) icon to expand the textbox menu.
- Enter your answer in the **Message** textbox.
- Click on the (Submit) button.

**Collection of threads**

**Thread: How many references needed?**

- Click on the (expand/collapse) icon to expand the textbox menu.
The reply will be displayed as shown:

**Note:** The instructor replies (posts) are displayed with a 🌟 (star) icon.

Navigate a discussion board

Enter a forum

Forums are used to divide your Discussion board into main topics to make it easier to use and navigate i.e. An assignment questions forum and/or a tutorial readings forum.

- From the **Course Menu** select **Discussion Board**.
- Click on the required forum link.

View thread

Threads are questions or subtopics. i.e. A thread may be a question on a particular reading at all students answer or a question from a student on an assignment. When creating a forum you set whether student can or cannot create threads.
• From the **Course Menu** select **Discussion Board**.
• Click on the required forum link.
• Click on the required thread link.

**Collect threads**

The collect button can be used to view the content of multiple threads and their replies (posts) at once.

• Check the checkboxes of the threads you want to display OR check the checkbox next to the date column title to select all threads.
• Click on the **Collect** (Collect) button.
Collapse All replies (posts)

- Click on the **Collapse All (Collapse All)** button.

Expand All replies (posts)

- Click on the **Expand All (Expand All)** button.
Collapse individual replies (posts)

- Hover over the required reply (post).
- Click on the **Collapse** link.

Expand individual replies (posts)

- Hover over the required reply (post).
- Click on the **Expand** link.

Breadcrumbs

The breadcrumbs at the top of the screen can be used to navigate displaying between displaying replies, threads and forums.
Edit, copy and delete a forum

Access the forum

- From the Course menu select Discussion board.

Edit a forum

- Hover over the forum title.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Edit from the drop down menu.
- Make the required changes to the forum settings.
- Click on the Submit (Submit) button.

Copy a forum

This option allows you to create a new forum with the same settings as a current forum.
- Hover over the forum title.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Copy from the drop down menu.
• Enter an informative title for the forum in the **Name** textbox.
• Select the required radio button.
  o **Entire forum** the whole forum including posts will be copied. Only file attachments will not be included.
  o **Forum settings only** recommended – Note the forum description is also copied.
• Select the location.
• Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.
Delete a forum

Note this will also delete the threads in the forum.

- Hover over the forum title.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Delete from the drop down menu.

Delete threads and delete/edit replies (including students)

You can delete both your own and students’ threads and replies (posts)

In some circumstances you may need to delete or edit inappropriate student threads or posts. Depending on the settings chosen when you set up the discussion board students may or may not be able to delete / edit their own threads and posts.

Delete threads

Note: It is not possible to edit threads.

Note: If deleting a student thread, you may wish to take a copy or screen shot of inappropriate threads for evidence.

- From the Course menu select Discussion board.
- Click on the required forum link.
- Check the checkbox of the required thread.
- Click on the (Delete) button.
- Click on the (OK) button in the dialog box.
Edit student replies (posts)

**Note:** If editing a student reply, you may wish to take a copy or screen shot of inappropriate reply (post) for evidence.

- From the **Course menu** select **Discussion board**.
- Click on the required forum link.
- Click on the required thread.
- Hover over the required reply (post)
- Click on the **Edit** (Edit) button.

- Edit the reply (post) as required.
- Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.

Delete student replies (posts)

**Note:** If deleting a student reply, you may wish to take a copy or screen shot of inappropriate reply (post) for evidence.

- From the **Course menu** select **Discussion board**.
- Click on the required forum link.
- Click on the required thread.
- Hover over the required reply (post)
• Click on the (Delete) button.

• Click on the (OK) button in the dialog box.

**Mark a forum**

You need to set up a forum to be marked when you create it. You can also edit the settings of an existing forum so it can be marked.

**Hide Grade Centre column**

Before you start marking hide the Grade Centre column from students so they cannot view their marks through My Grades as they are entered. (The column was automatically created when you created the forum).

• From the Control Panel select Grade Centre > Full Grade Centre.
• Hover over the title of the required column.
• Click on the (arrow) button...
• Select Show/Hide to Users from the drop down menu.
- Hidden columns display a 😍 icon.

Grade Discussion Forum

- From the Course menu select Discussion board.
- Click on required forum link.

- Click on the Grade Discussion Forum (Grade Discussion Forum) button.

- Click on the Grade (Grade) button of the required student.
Grade Forum

- Enter the mark in the Grade textbox.
- Enter student feedback in the Feedback textbox.

*Note:* Click on the Add Notes link to enter information that is not viewable by students.

Spell check (Optional)

- Select UK English from the drop down list and click on the (Spell check) button.
Text Editor (Optional)

Optionally you can also enter the mark, feedback and grading notes using the text editor.

- Click on the (Text Editor) button.
- Click on the (Submit) button.

Grade using a rubric

You need to attach the rubric in the forum settings. Click on the Online contributions link to open the rubric inline OR

- Click on the (mark rubric) icon to open the rubric in a separate window.
- Check the **Show Descriptions** checkbox to display criterion descriptors.
- Check the **Show Feedback** checkbox to display a feedback box per criteria.
- Select the required mark for each criteria.

- The marks are automatically totalled and shown as the **Raw Total** at the end of the screen.

*Note:* The **Change the number of points out of X to** textbox allows you to override the automatic total and enter another mark.
If you use this option and then change marks in the criteria section, the mark entered in the **Change the number of points out of X to** textbox does not automatically update.

- Enter student feedback in the **Feedback** textbox.
  
  **Note:** Optional, click the **(Text Editor)** button to enter feedback.

- Click on the **(Save Rubric)** button.

- Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.

**Next student**

- Expand the **Contributors** list. OR
- Navigate to the required student using the left and right arrows buttons.
Grade Centre

The marks are automatically transferred to a column in Grade Centre.

Return student marks and feedback

To unhide the forum column so students can view their marks and feedback through My Grades:

- Hover over the title of the required column.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Show/Hide to Users from the drop down menu.

Mark a thread

Hide Grade Centre column

Before you start marking hide the Grade Centre column from students so they cannot view their marks through My Grades as they are entered. (The column was automatically created when you created the thread).

- From the Control Panel select Grade Centre > Full Grade Centre.
- Hover over the title of the required column.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Show/Hide to Users from the drop down menu.
Grade Discussion Forum

- From the Course menu select Discussion board.
- Click on required forum link.
- Click on the required thread link.

- Click on the Grade Thread (Grade Thread) button of the required thread.

Forum: Tutorial readings

Organize Forum Threads on this page and apply settings to several or all threads. Threads are listed in a tabular format. The Threads can be sorted by clicking the column title or the arrow at the top of each column. More Help.

- Click on the Grade (Grade) button of the required student.
Grade Thread

- Enter the mark in the Grade textbox.
- Enter student feedback in the Feedback textbox.

*Note:* Click on the Add Notes link to enter information that is not viewable by students.

Spell check (Optional)

- Select UK English from the drop down list and click on the (Spell check) button.
Text Editor (Optional)
Optionally you can also enter the mark, feedback and grading notes using the text editor.

- Click on the (Text Editor) button.

Grade using a rubric
You need to attach the rubric when creating the thread.

- Click on the Online contributions link to open the rubric inline OR
- Click on the (mark rubric) icon to open the rubric in a separate window.
- Check the **Show Descriptions** checkbox to display criterion descriptors.
- Check the **Show Feedback** checkbox to display a feedback box per criteria.
- Select the required mark for each criteria.

- The marks are automatically totalled and shown as the **Raw Total** at the end of the screen.

**Note:** The **Change the number of points out of X to** textbox allows you to override the automatic total and enter another mark.
If you use this option and then change marks in the criteria section, the mark entered in the **Change the number of points out of X to** textbox does not automatically update.

- Enter student feedback in the **Feedback** textbox.
  
  **Note:** Optional, click the **Text Editor** button to enter feedback.

- Click on the **Save Rubric** button.

Next student

- Expand the **Contributors** list. OR
- Navigate to the required student using the left and right arrows buttons.
Grade Centre

The marks are automatically transferred to a column in **Grade Centre**.

![Grade Centre image]

**Return student marks and feedback**

To unhide the thread column so students can view their marks and feedback through *My Grades*:

- Hover over the title of the required column.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select **Show/Hide to Users** from the drop down menu.

**Using the Become Student tool**

This tool allows you to view your course as a student. The tool can be used to test interactive tools such as tests and to check what your students are able to see in *My Grades*.

You need to complete the following three steps to use the tool.

1. Make the course available.
2. Add Dummy students.
3. Use Become student tool.

**Making your course available**

By default courses are not available to students when they are first created. To make your course visible to students you need to change the **Availability** setting.

- From the **Control Panel** select **Customisation > Properties**.
Set Availability

- Select the Yes radio button for the setting Make Course Available.

- Click the (Submit) button.
Tip: Remember to turn availability Off again after you finish testing, if you are still preparing your course.

Adding dummy students
The tool works with the dummy students nc_student1 and nc_student2. These dummy students may be added to any course.

- From the Control Panel select Course Tools > Become Student.
- By default both dummy students nc_student1 and nc_student2 are selected to be enrolled.
  Note: The groups the dummy students belong to are highlighted.
- Click on the Submit button.
Using the Become student tool

Viewing the course as a student

- Click on the (Select student) button.
- Select the required student from the drop down list.

The course will now be displayed in student view.

Return to instructor view

- Click on the (Back to Instructor) button.
Create a group discussion boards

Group discussion boards can be allocated when you create groups (refer to the Groups tool page). You can also edit the settings of a set of groups that you have already created to allocate them discussion boards. Groups that are transferred to Blackboard from SI-net (i.e. Practical and Tutorial) can also be allocated a discussion board by changing the settings of each group individually.

Access groups

- From the Control Panel select Users and Groups > Groups

Allocate discussion boards to a set of groups

*Note:* There is no group set for SI-net groups (i.e. Practical and Tutorial), discussion boards will need to be allocated to these groups individually.

- Click on the Group Sets link.
- Hover over the group set name.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select Edit Group Set Properties from the drop down list.

*Note:* Students cannot view or contribute to group discussion boards of which they are not members.
Check the **Discussion Board** checkbox:

- **Allow any members to create forums** – recommended
- **Do not allow student group members to create forums** – you will need to setup forums individually in each group discussion board before they can be used by students.

Click on the **Submit** (Submit) button.
Allocate a discussion board to an individual group

- Click on the **All Groups** link.
- Hover over the group name.
- Click on the (arrow) button.
- Select **Edit Group** from the drop down list.

- Check the **Discussion Board** checkbox:
  - **Allow any members to create forums** – recommended
  - **Do not allow student group members to create forums** – you will need to setup forums individually in each group discussion board before they can be used by students.

- Click on the (Submit) button.
**Student view of a course with group discussion boards:**

![Diagram of course discussion boards]

- **Course discussion board - all students**
- **Group discussion board - student group members and staff**

**Note:** Students can not view or contribute to group discussion boards of which they are not members.
Further Resources

Technical Support
Helpdesk staff - Reece Hardy, Michael Luton and Gary Smith
help@learn.uq.edu.au or Ph 336 56000 Option 1

Faculty Educational Designers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Educational Designer</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEL</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAIT</td>
<td>Esther Fink</td>
<td><a href="mailto:e.fink@uq.edu.au">e.fink@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 57390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HABS</td>
<td>Jessica Tsai</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.tsai@uq.edu.au">j.tsai@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 56641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HASS</td>
<td>Chris Frost</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.frost1@uq.edu.au">c.frost1@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 56075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inge Matt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:i.matt@uq.edu.au">i.matt@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 51333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MABS</td>
<td>Kym Ward (Medicine)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:k.ward1@uq.edu.au">k.ward1@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>334 64620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael O'Brien (Population Health)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.obrien3@uq.edu.au">m.obrien3@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 55347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Marnie Holt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:m.holt2@uq.edu.au">m.holt2@uq.edu.au</a></td>
<td>336 58869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical Resources
http://www.elearning.uq.edu.au/content/tools-a-z-guide
A range of resources are available on our website, including self-help text based guides, self-help videos, teaching and learning quick-guides and information on known technical issues. Updates are also available on the progress of eLearning projects such as the implementation of new tools and upgrades to current systems. This site is currently being redeveloped to improve

eLearning Blog
The focus of this blog is to provide information on what's new in eLearning. There will be regular posts on topics such as new eLearning initiatives, progress on eLearning projects, training news, technical issues, resources, tips and tricks and tutorials. The blog will include contributions from all ITS Teaching and Learning Support team members as well as guest posts from Faculty Educational Designers.
http://www.elearning.uq.edu.au/content/welcome
Pedagogical Resources
www.tedi.uq.edu.au

Pedagogical resources for eLearning are provided by the Teaching and Educational Development Institute (TEDI).
  
  - Course Site Framework An overview of the eLearning tools at UQ available.

Student Resources
http://www.library.uq.edu.au/ask-it/learnuq-blackboard

ITS Workshops
A range of technical eLearning workshops are offered throughout the year. For descriptions of the workshops, dates and to enrol, visit https://staffdevelopment.hr.uq.edu.au/program/TALTEC

TEDI Workshops
A range of pedagogical eLearning workshops are offered throughout the year.
For descriptions of the workshops, dates and to enrol, visit https://staffdevelopment.hr.uq.edu.au/program/LRNSPA.

Custom Workshops
Custom workshops for schools can also be requested:
  
  - eLearning technical workshops: Ailsa Dickie a.dickie1@uq.edu.au
  - eLearning pedagogical workshops: tedi@uq.edu.au
  - combined technical and pedagogical workshops: a.dickie1@uq.edu.au or tedi@uq.edu.au

Prepared by: [Ailsa Dickie]
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