



Blackboard Basics—Communication Tools

Communication Tools

Blackboard provides a palette of communication tools from which to maintain the student connection. Each section below describes these in detail as well as their functionalities.

Email

Instructors and students can send email to individuals who participate in the course from the Email link on the main course navigation menu. Emails can be sent to individual users or to groups of users within the course, such as all Teaching Assistants, all Students or individuals. Email sent through the Blackboard email tool corresponds with the student’s LMU email.

Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is an asynchronous communication tool that allows students and instructors to participate in online discussions without requiring all class participants to be online at the same time. To add this type of communication to your Blackboard course, a **Forum** (the question or idea that you want to base the discussion around) must be added. These steps will adding a *Forum* beginning in the from the main Discussion panel under the Control Panel option.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a Discussion Board. On the left is a navigation menu with buttons for Announcements, Syllabus, Instructor Info., Learning Units, Communication, Tools, Resources, and Grade Center. Below this is a 'Tools' section with icons for Communication, Course Tools, My Portfolios, and Course Map. The main content area is titled 'Discussion Board' and features a '+ Forum' button. Below that is a search section with a text input field, a dropdown menu set to 'Current Discussion Board', and date filters for 'After' and 'Before' (both set to Mar 05 2009). A table lists the forum 'Student Lounge' with 0 total posts, 0 unread posts, and 0 total participants. Action buttons for 'Modify', 'Manage', 'Remove', and 'Copy' are visible. A message below the table states: 'You may use this discussion forum to discuss issues with course work related to this class. Please do not use this discussion forum for personal communication. Flaming messages will result in the sender being blocked from all discussion boards.'

Display Order	Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants				
1	Student Lounge Students:	0	0	0	Modify	Manage	Remove	Copy





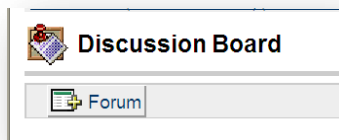
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Step 1: Click the Control Panel button

Step 2: Choose the **Discussion Board** link from the Course Tools section of the Control Panel. The button for adding *Forums* will appear at the top, left side of the screen.



Step 3: Click the Forum icon. Clicking on a forum will also bring up a new interface.



Step 4: Enter the forum's title. This title will appear as the name of the Discussion Board forum to all users (i.e., Student Lounge).

Step 5: Enter a description of the forum and choose the forum settings.

2 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 file attachments
- Allow members to create new threads
- Allow members to subscribe to threads
- Allow members to rate posts
- Force moderation of posts

Grade grading in forum

grade forum: Points possible:

grade threads

Step 6: Click **Submit**.



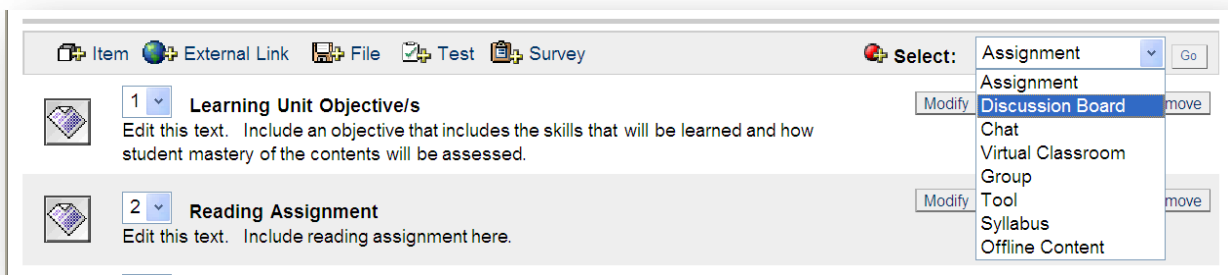


Add Forums to Content Areas

Discussion Board *forums* were added in previous section from the main Discussion Board tool that lists *all* the forums in the course. This area provides a centralized view and easy access of all Discussion Board forums currently launched within the course.

These steps will describe how to create a Discussion Board access point within Content area:

Step 1: Open the Control Panel and navigate to the desired Content Area (i.e. Learning Units). On the right side of the action bar, select Discussion Board from the Select dropdown field, then click **Go**.



Step 2: This will be a two-step process.

- a) Select **Discussion Board Page**
 - b) Then click **Create New Forum**
- OR
- a.) Select a **Discussion Board Forum**
 - b.) Choose a forum from the list
 - c.) Click **Next**.

Step 3: Enter the forum information. The Name and Description information will be exactly what the users see when they open the discussion board.

Step 4: Forum Settings (*See image above in step 5*) These options will determine how the link and discussion threads will present to the users and the options that will be permitted.

Step 5: Click **Submit**

