The Forums tool allows lecturers to set up a threaded discussion that can be read or contributed to by the entire class or assigned groups. Students can write inline comments and share documents. The tool records the number of posts by students, and forum posts can be linked to Gradebook for grading.

Discussions are organised under the hierarchy of **Forums > Topics > Conversations > Replies**.

Below is an explanation of the workspace within the Forums tool:
Index

This tutorial will address the following topics:

How to access the Forums tool
How to create a new forum
How to add a new topic
How to organise forums and topics
How to post to a forum topic
How to reply to a forum post (conversation)
How to email a forum post author
How to delete a forum post (conversation)
How to moderate a topic
How to grade a discussion forum
How to move a thread to a different topic
How to delete a topic
How to delete a forum
How to modify forum template settings
How to watch or subscribe to forums

Need Help?
How to access the Forums tool

Back to index

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

What if you cannot see the Calendar tool? Click here for the steps to add a tool to your site.

How to create a new forum

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Forums are useful for grouping several similar topics together, such as graded discussions, or group topics. They can also be used to specify the default topic settings for all topics within the forum. All new topics will inherit the forum settings by default.

Important:
The Forum tool is organized by Forums, Topics, and Conversations.

• A Forum is a mandatory category or grouping for topics. There may be more than one Forum in the course or project site.

• Topics are required within Forums in order for site participants to be able to post, read, and reply to messages. If you create a forum but no topic, then students will not see the forum.

• Conversations are messages or threads of discussion posted within a Topic.
To create a new forum, go to the Forums tool in your Tool menu.

By default, new sites are populated with a single forum titled after the name of the site, and containing one topic for General Discussion. The default forum and topic may be edited for posting messages, add more topics to the existing forum, or add a new forum.

Click the New Forum tab at the top to add a new forum.

A settings page will appear where you can set the settings for the forum and any topics you will add to the forum.

1. **Forum title** is required. Name the forum a title to easily identify the types of topics expected within it. Remember that users post messages within topics, not forums. Forums are a grouping or classification of topics.

2. Add a short description that will be displayed to the user when they view the Forum tool.
3 After the short description box you have the option to provide more detailed instructions about the items in this forum, using the Description area to enter the information. This area includes the Rich Text Editor and allows for more advanced formatting options. You can even embed images or video.

3 Description

In this section a lecturer would usually provide more detail and possibly a video or article to give a little more context.

It is always good practice to provide students with a rubric on how you are planning to grade them. This can be done by forum or by topic.

You may attach files to the forum. Click the Add attachments button to browse for and select a file.
Once a file has been selected and uploaded you will see a view of the attachments. Click the **Browse** button again to add additional attachments or click **Continue**.

### Add Attachment

Select an existing item from Resources to attach OR add a new item to a folder to be attached. Click “Continue” when done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items to attach</th>
<th>Remove?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How to Use Blended Learning in a Training Program.pdf</strong></td>
<td>![Remove](X Remove)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Upload local file**

**Browse...** No file selected.

**or a URL (link to website)**

Add

### Attachments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How_to_Use_Blended_Learning_in_a_Training_Program.pdf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remove**

**Add more attachments**

### Forum Posting

- [ ] Lock forum (disable forum postings)
- [ ] Moderate topics in forum
- [ ] Require users to post before reading

There are several **forum posting** options from which to choose. Remember, any settings selected here will apply to all of the topics within this forum by default. *(However, these may be overridden the settings on an individual topic if desired.)*
- **Lock forum**: This option locks the forum so users can no longer post messages. However, they can continue to read existing messages.
- **Moderate topics in forum**: This option means all messages posted within topics in this forum, must be approved by the instructor before other students can see them.
- **Require users to post before reading**: Selecting this option requires users to post their own response first, before they can view other messages posted previously. This is a good option to select if the Instructor wishes students to respond to a discussion prompt before seeing other student responses.

### Availability

- Show immediately
- Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide)

Select the **availability** for the forum. The default option is to **Show Immediately**, or choose to **Specify dates** to open (show) and/or close (hide).

**Tip:** Setting open and close dates at the forum level can be tricky because individual topics may also have specified dates. However, the forum must be visible in order for the topics within the forum to be available to students. Typically, lecturers set open/close dates at the topic level only.

### Mark All Messages in Conversations Read

- Automatically mark all messages in a conversation as read

Select the **Read** options. The default option is unchecked, allowing the user mark each post as read after reading. Selecting this option will mark all messages within a conversation, or thread, as read.

### Grading

- Gradebook Item: [Existing Item]

Specify the **Gradebook item** that this Forum must be linked to. When grading forum posts, select a specific gradebook item for the grades to be included in the Gradebook calculations.

**Note:** You must first create the gradebook item in Gradebook tool before you can select it to be associated with a forum or topic.

**Tip:** Similar to open/close dates, associating with the Gradebook at the forum level is not always ideal because individual topics may also be graded. Most lecturers may prefer to grade discussions at the topic level.
Permissions

In most cases, the default forum permissions are appropriate. By default, instructors are forum Owners (1), and all other site participants are Contributors. The forum owner may add and delete topics, modify permissions, edit the forum and topic descriptions, etc. Contributors may only read, post and reply to messages.

To modify the default permissions, click Customize (2) to expand the permission settings.

1. Select the drop-down menu next to each role/group to choose one of the pre-configured options (i.e. Author, Contributor, None, Non-editing Author, Owner, Reviewer).
2. Forum permissions may be customised for different user roles, or for groups within the class. Click the Customise to further expand the options for a particular role and define more granular custom permissions.

**Note:** Groups must already exist in order for group role permissions to display.

Once completed, scroll to the bottom of the page and select the Save button. (Alternately, if you would like to go directly to the screen to begin adding a new topic to the forum you just created, you may select Save Settings & Add Topic instead. Click here for the next steps in creating a topic.)

**Note:** All forums need at least one topic in order to be active.
How to add a new topic

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click the New Topic link for the Forum you wish to add the topic to. Alternatively, if no topics have been created for the forum yet, click the Create a Topic link in the box below.

Next you will start to add the topic information.

Start by providing your topic title (required) and a short description of what this topic will focus on.

* Topic Title

SS 1.1: Verbal issues in intercultural communication

Short Description (255 characters max) 181 chars remain

Critically discuss the role that language plays within different cultures.

Note: Be aware of the short description 255 character limit.
Create a **detailed description** in the description box that allows the use of the Rich Text Editor.

Use this space to provide more detailed explanations and what you expect of your students.

**Good practice guidelines:**
- Provide some questions to help your students get started with the discussion.
- You could also include some reading materials for your students, or a video that would provide some context or examples of typical issues in the topic.
- Always make sure that your students understand how they will be graded for this discussion to ensure good discussions.

Words: 75, Characters (with HTML): 576/1000000

If you are going to refer to specific materials, you can attach it to the topic to make it easily accessible for your students:

**Attachments**

No attachments yet

![Add attachments button]

Select the **topic posting options:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Posting</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lock Topic (Disable topic postings)</td>
<td>This setting cannot be changed after topic creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require users to post before reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts are anonymous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are several **topic posting** options from which to choose. Any settings selected here will apply to this topic only.

- **Lock topic:** This option locks the topic so users can no longer post messages. However, they can continue to read existing messages.
- **Moderate topic:** This option means all messages posted within the topic must be approved by the lecturer before other students can see them.

- **Require users to post before reading:** Selecting this option requires users to post their own response first, before they can view other messages posted previously. This is a good option to select if the lecturer wishes students to respond to a discussion prompt before seeing other student responses and force them to really think about the topic and formulate their own opinions.

- **Posts are anonymous:** Select this option if you want site participants to be able to post without displaying the name of the post's author.

![Image]

**Note:** If you choose the option to make posts anonymous, an additional option will appear to allow you to reveal identities to certain roles or groups. If you are planning on grading the posts, make sure to indicate that the identities have to be revealed to your role.

**Availability**

- **Show immediately**
- **Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide)**

Select the availability for the forum. The default option is to Show Immediately, or choose to Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide).

**Tip:** Setting open and close dates at the forum level can be tricky because individual topics may also have specified dates. However, the forum must be visible in order for the topics within the forum to be available to students. Typically, lecturers set open/close dates at the topic level only.

**Mark All Messages in Conversations Read**

- **Automatically mark all messages in a conversation as read**

Select the Read options. The default option is unchecked, allowing the user mark each post as read after reading. Selecting this option will mark all messages within a conversation, or thread, as read.
Grading

Specify the Gradebook item that this Forum must be linked to. When grading forum posts, select a specific gradebook item for the grades to be included in the Gradebook calculations.

**Note:** You must first create the gradebook item in Gradebook tool before you can select it to be associated with a forum or topic.

Automatically Create Topics

- Create one topic
- Automatically create multiple topics for groups

An instance of this topic will be created for each group selected below. Permissions are configured automatically. (More?)

- Group Assignment (1)
- Group Assignment (2)
- Group Assignment (3)
- Group Assignment (4)

If you would like to create multiple, private group topic areas, select the radio button for **Automatically create topics for groups** and then check the box next to each group for which a topic should be created. Each group member will be set to "Contributor" in their group's topic and "None" in other automatically created topics. The default Student role will also automatically be set to the permission level of "None".

**Tip:** This is an especially helpful feature when you are dealing with very large classes and would like to divide the class into smaller groups to ensure that all get a fair chance for contributing. The larger the group, the more likely students will have similar opinions making it difficult for students to formulate their unique contributions.

Permissions

In most cases, the default topic permissions are appropriate. By default, instructors are forum Owners (1), and all other site participants are Contributors. The topic owner may add and delete topics, modify permissions, edit the topic and topic descriptions, etc. Contributors may only read, post and reply to messages.

To modify the default permissions, click Customise (2) to expand the permission settings.
1. Select the drop-down menu next to each role/group to choose one of the pre-configured options (i.e. Author, Contributor, None, Non-editing Author, Owner, Reviewer).
2. Forum permissions may be customised for different user roles, or for groups within the class. Click the Customise to further expand the options for a particular role and define more granular custom permissions.

**Note:** Groups must already exist in order for group role permissions to display.

Once completed, scroll to the bottom of the page and select the Save button. (Alternately, if you would like to add more topics to the forum, you may select Save Settings & Add Topic instead.

**Note:** All forums need at least one topic in order to be active.
How to organise forums & topics

Forums may be rearranged to change the order in which discussions are listed.

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click the Organise tab at the top of the screen.

Select the appropriate number next to the Forum or Topic. The numeric pull down menu allows for reordering the Forum, Topic or both. Select the appropriate number for the order in which the items should appear. One will appear at the top, while the highest number will appear at the bottom of the page.

After you have placed the forums and topics in the desired order, click Save.
How to post to a forum topic

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Below is an example of a forum. The forum title will appear in bold and in a larger font than the topic titles indented beneath it. If you would like to view more information about the forum, you may click View Full Description to view any additional information provided by the site owner.

Indicated by the green block above is an example of the topic. If you would like to view more information about the topic, you may click View Full Description to view any additional information provided by the site owner. Click on the topic title (1) to enter that topic.
Starting a new conversation is the same thing as starting a new thread. After you click Start a New Conversation, the message composition window will appear.

Enter a title (1) and a message (2) for your students. The message box allows for use of the Rich Text Editor, this means you can include elements such as video and images in your messages. Take note of the message count (3) in the lower right corner.
If desired, there is an option to upload attachments to the conversation. Click **Add attachments** to browse for and select your file.

After completing the conversation, click **Post** to make the conversation viewable.

**TIP:**
Depending on the type of forum discussion, you might not want each student to start and have a separate conversation, but rather have the entire conversation taking place in one space. To achieve this you will have to follow these steps:

1. Go to the **topic settings**:
   
   [Image of topic settings]

2. In the Permissions section, customise the role of contributor, and uncheck the option that allows for new conversations to be started:
   
   [Image of permissions settings]

3. Save the topic settings.

4. Then click on **Start a New Conversation** and post the first message that will allow students to all only reply to your posted message.
How to reply to a forum post (conversation)

Back to index

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click on the title of the topic to enter the topic.

Note: The message indicator next to the topic title will tell you how many messages have been posted within that topic, and how many of them are new or unread.

Click on the title of an existing post to view the conversation:

On the next page, note the differences between the instructor and student view when replying to messages.
You have two different options for replying to the post within the Forums tool.

1. Click **Reply to Initial Message** at the top of the conversation to reply to the first message in the conversation or thread.
2. Click the **Reply** button within the message itself to reply to the item you are currently viewing. This is the option you want to use if you would like to reply to someone else's reply.
1. The message you are replying to will be displayed at the top. You can hide/view the message by clicking on the small downward arrow next to "Hide/view the message you are replying to".

2. The title will be taken from the initial message and prefilled for you, but you may modify it if you wish.

3. Use the Rich Text Editor message box to type your reply.

   **Note:** You may optionally click on the Insert original text link above the editor area to include the original message along with your reply.

4. Click the Add attachments button if you would like to browse for and attach a file.

5. Click the Post button to post your message to the conversation.
How to email a forum post (conversation) author

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click on the title of the topic to enter the topic.

Click on the title of an existing post to view the conversation:

Click Email below the author’s name in order to email the forum post author.
How to delete a forum post (conversation)

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Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click on the title of the topic to enter the topic.

Click on the title of an existing post to view the conversation:

Click Delete Message below the author’s name in order to email the forum post author.
If you are sure you want to delete the message, click **Delete** again to confirm removal. The message will be permanently deleted.

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The role of language in culture

**Eline Van Nickerk** (20586463) | Dec 6, 2018 11:17 AM

Viewed from a linguistic determinism perspective, language is extremely important in how intercultural communication takes shape. In fact, many believe that language as a linguistic code provides the ultimate framework for thinking, communicating and being.

Take the opportunity now to compare the language and verbal cues from your own language to that of the culture that you have chosen to focus on for this module.

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**How to moderate a topic**

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A moderated discussion allows the instructor to review and approve a discussion posting before the participants may view the post. When a discussion is moderated, each message submitted by a participant must be reviewed and approved before other participants may read them.

Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.

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**Note:** If you did not indicate that you want to moderate a specific topic, you can edit the topic settings, check the box to moderate and then save the settings for the topic.
Click on the title of the topic to enter the topic.

Click on the title of a message/conversation with new/unread messages to view it.

All messages pending approval will display Pending highlighted in green next to the conversation/message.

Click the Moderate button. Click either Deny or Approve to moderate the message. Approved messages will be visible to the rest of the site participants. Denied messages remain visible to the instructor only.
How to grade a discussion forum topic

Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.

Select on the topic you want to grade, then click the **More** link and select the **Grade** link option.

You will see a list of site participants along with summary statistics for each user on number of posts authored, read, unread, and percent read in the current topic. You may sort the list by any of those columns by clicking on the column title if you choose.

Select the gradebook item where you would like to record the scores for this topic from the drop-down menu in the upper right corner. Once you select a gradebook item, the screen will change to display a grade entry column where you may enter points.

**Note:** You must create the gradebook item in the gradebook BEFORE you can associate a Forum or Topic with the item for grading.

**Note:** You may grade by either Forum or Topic. The grading process is very similar. However, most lecturers prefer to grade by Topic, since a Forum may contain several different Topics and each Topic may represent a separate gradebook item or score.
Note: If you already associated your Topic with a gradebook item, then you do not need to complete this step. You should have been taken directly to the grade entry screen.

To view posts, click on the author’s name. A window will open showing the message/s posted by that author. Notice that the Word Count in each post is also shown.

Click the Close Window button to close the window and return to the grade entry screen.
Enter **points(1)** into the grade entry column.

If you would like to add comments, click on the **Show Comments (2)** link to expand the comment column.

Enter your comments into the text boxes provided.

If you would like to apply a single score to all ungraded items, enter the score to be applied and then click the **Apply Grade to all Ungraded** button.

After you have entered all of the grades and/or comments, scroll down to the bottom of the list and click the **Submit Grades** button to save your changes and send the grades to the gradebook.
How to move a thread (conversation) to a different topic

This option allows for a thread or conversation to be moved to a different topic.

Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.

The topics will be listed underneath the corresponding forum in smaller, bold font. Click on the topic containing the item to be moved.

**Check the box (1)** next to the conversation/thread you would like to move. Click the **Move Thread(s)** (2) button.
1. You have the option to check the box to *leave a reminder about the move in the old topic.*
2. Select the *Forum* that contains the new topic you would like to move the conversation to.
3. Select the *topic* in the forum you would like to move the conversation to.
4. Click the *Move Thread(s) to Selected Topic* button to complete the move.
How to delete a Topic

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click the More link next to the topic you would like to delete, then choose the Delete Topic option from the drop-down menu.

You will be prompted to confirm the deletion. If you are sure that you want to delete the topic and all of the messages within it, click the Delete Topic button.
How to delete a Forum

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

METHOD 1:

Click the More link next to the forum you would like to delete, then choose the Delete Forum option from the drop-down menu.

You will be prompted to confirm the deletion. If you are sure that you want to delete the topic and all of the messages within it, click the Delete Topic button.

METHOD 2:

Click the Forum Settings link next to the forum you would like to delete. Then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click the Delete forum button. Confirm deletion on the next screen.

Deleting a forum will remove the forum and everything associated with it, including all topics and conversations. If you are sure you want to delete the forum, click Delete Forum to remove it from the site.
How to modify template settings

Template Settings control the default settings of each created forum. These settings can be overridden for a specific forum or topic, but must be manually changed after the default settings template is created.

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click the Template Settings tab at the top of the screen.

The default settings template allows you configure the default settings for all new Forums and Topics in this site.

Default Settings Template

Settings from this template will apply each time a new Forum or Topic is created. You can override these settings for a specific Forum or Topic after it has been created.

Choose the preferred Forum Posting settings:

Forum Posting

Moderate topics in forums

- Yes
- No

Require users to post before reading

- Yes
- No
Template Settings allows the option for all Forums to be shown immediately after they are created or based on specified open (show) and close (hide) dates.

**Availability**

- Show immediately
- Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide)

Template settings allows the option for conversations to be marked read automatically.

**Mark All Messages in Conversations Read**

Automatically mark all messages in a conversation as read

- Yes
- No

Template Settings allows the option to select permission levels within Forums based on user roles or groups within the site. User roles can be given the title of Author, Contributor, None, Nonediting Author, Owner, Reviewer, and Custom. In the Customize drop-down menu, the check boxes are automatically selected based on the permission level selected. If the check boxes are manually chosen, this fulfills the Custom Permission Level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Permission Level</th>
<th>Customize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Instructor</td>
<td>Contributor</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examiner</td>
<td>Contributor</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Contributor</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Contributor</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UOOL Facilitator</td>
<td>Contributor</td>
<td>Customise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** You may see different roles depending on whether your site is a course or a project, and whether or not there are any groups or custom roles in your site.

Click **Save** to save your settings (or **Cancel** to continue without saving).
How to watch or subscribe to forums

Back to index

In order to stay notified of recent posts on a forum, the Watch option is helpful in doing so.

Note: New post notifications will be sent to the user's external/institutional email address, not via the Messages tool.

Select Forums from the Tool Menu of your site.

Click the Watch tab at the top of the screen.

The default settings template allows you configure the default settings for all new Forums and Topics in this site.

Watch Forums Options

Use the settings below to change what notifications you receive when activity in the forums of this site take place.

- [ ] Send me an email whenever a new message is posted
- [ ] Send me an email when a conversation that I have contributed to receives a new message
- [x] No notification

Save Cancel

Select whether an email is desired for every new message posted on the Forum, every new message posted on a Forum that the user has contributed to, or turn off all notifications. Click Save when you are done.
Need help?

You can make use of the Sakai based Help resources available on all eFundi sites, or contact your site of delivery eFundi Support Desk.

OR: Please attend eFundi training or stop by during office hours for additional help.

eFundi Support Desk:

**Mafikeng**
E-mail: 25967878@nwu.ac.za  
Tel.: 018 389 2447  
Office: ADC Building, Block D, Office G80

**Potchefstroom**
E-mail: EFUNDI-PC@nwu.ac.za  
Tel.: 018 285 2295  
Office: Building E8, Room 107A

**Vaal Triangle**
E-mail: VTC-EFUNDISTAFF@nwu.ac.za  
Tel.: 016 910 3317/8  
Office: Building 13, room SL313