

Description: Forums allows instructors or site leaders to create an unlimited number of discussion forums for their course or project sites.

### Key Concepts:

- Add the Forums Tool**
- Create a New Forum and Topic**
- Revise or Delete a Forum or Topic**
- Post a Message**
- Reply to a Message or Topic**
- Moderate a Forum**
- Mark a Message as Read**
- Notifications**
- Grade a Participant's Message**
- Create a Forum or Topic for a Specific Group**

### Add the Forums Tool:

- Step 1:** Click [\[Site Info\]](#) in the site you wish to add the Forums tool.
- Step 2:** Click [\[Edit Tools\]](#).
- Step 3:** Place a checkbox next to the Forums tool.
- Step 4:** Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click [\[Continue\]](#) and then [\[Finish\]](#).

### Create a New Forum and Topic:

**NOTE:** When you create a forum, you will need to add a least one topic so site participants can post messages. The forum will not be visible to participants unless a topic is added.

- Step 1:** In your site's menubar, click [\[Forums\]](#). The Forums screen will open.
- Step 2:** At the top of your screen, click [\[New Forum\]](#). The Forum Settings screen will open.
- Step 3:** In the Forum Title field, type your forum's title. This is a required field, and is limited to 75 characters.
- Step 4:** In the Short Description field, you have the option of providing a brief description (limited to 100 characters) that will be displayed along with the title in the Discussion Forums area.
- Step 5:** In the Description field, you may enter an in-depth description of your forum, and provide any associated

information or resources.

**Step 6:** To add an attachment from your local computer or from Resources, under Attachments, click [\[Add Attachment\]](#). The file selector screen will open.

**Step 7:** To disable forum postings, under Forum Posting, click the [\[Yes\]](#) radio button next to Lock Forum (Disable topic postings). The [\[No\]](#) radio button is selected by default, allowing site participants to post messages about your forum topic.

**Step 8:** Moderating forms and topics allows the site administrator to approve or deny a participant's posting. The site administrator(s) will receive an email request for each post. Choose [\[yes\]](#) to moderate the topic or [\[no\]](#) to not moderate it.

**Step 9:** You can modify permission levels for participant roles. From the list under permissions select a role for editing by clicking its name. Next to Permission Level, use the drop-down list to select from several predefined permission levels. Additionally, you can create custom permission levels by clicking to enable or disable functions.

**Step 10:** **(Optional)** Next to Gradebook Item, use the drop-down list to choose the gradebook item with which the form should be associated. You may grade postings on the forum or topic level.

**NOTE: The Gradebook item MUST already be created in the gradebook for this option to be available. To add an item to the Gradebook, refer to the Gradebook documentation.**

**Step 11:** To save the forum and to add a topic, click [\[Save Settings & Add Topic\]](#). Click [\[Save Draft\]](#) to save your forum as a draft or click [\[Cancel\]](#) to exit and return to the Forums screen. Forums saved as a draft will not be available to site participants.

**NOTE: When you create a forum, you will need to add a least one topic so site participants can post messages. The forum will not be visible to participants unless a topic is added.**

**Step 12:** In the Topic Title field, type your topic's title. This is a required field, and is limited to 75 characters.

**Step 13:** In the Short Description field, you have the option of providing a brief description (limited to 100 characters) that will be displayed below the title in the Discussion Forums area.

**Step 14:** In the Description field, you may enter an in-depth description of your topic, and provide any associated information or resources.

**Step 15:** To add an attachment from your local computer or from Resources, under Attachments, click [\[Add Attachment\]](#). The file selector screen will open.

**Step 16:** To disable topic postings, under Topic Posting, click the [\[Yes\]](#) radio button next to Lock Forum (Disable topic

postings). The No radio button is selected by default, allowing site participants to post messages about your forum topic.

**Step 17:** To moderate forum postings, under Topic Posting click [\[Yes\]](#) radio button next to Moderate Topic. The No radio button is selected by default, allowing site participants messages to post automatically.

**Step 18:** Under Permissions, you can modify permission levels for participant roles. From the list under permissions select a role for editing by clicking its name. Next to Permission Level, use the drop-down list to select from several predefined permission levels. Additionally, you can create custom permission levels by clicking to enable or disable the functions that follow.

**Step 19:** Next to Gradebook Item, use the drop-down list to choose the gradebook item with which the topic should be associated. You may grade postings on the topic or forum level.

**NOTE: The Gradebook item MUST already be created in the gradebook for this option to be available. To add an item to the Gradebook, refer to the Gradebook documentation.**

**Step 20:** To save the topic, click [\[Save Settings\]](#). To save the topic and add another topic, click [\[Save Settings & Add Topic\]](#). Click [\[Save Draft\]](#) to save your forum as a draft or click [\[Cancel\]](#) to exit and return to the Forums screen. Forums saved as a draft will not be available to site participants.

## Revise or Delete a Forum and Topic:

**NOTE: In order to revise or delete a forum or topic, you must be assigned a role having the necessary permissions.**

**Step 1:** In your site's menubar, click [\[Forums\]](#). The Forums screen will open.

**Step 2:** Click [\[Forum Settings\]](#) or [\[Topic Settings\]](#) for the appropriate forum or topic you wish to modify.

**Step 3:** Make any necessary changes to forum or topic and click [\[Save Settings\]](#) to save your changes. To save the changes and add another topic, click [\[Save Settings & Add Topic\]](#). Click [\[Save Draft\]](#) to save the forum or topic as a draft. Click [\[Delete\]](#) to delete the forum or topic, or click [\[Cancel\]](#) to exit without changes and return to the Forums screen. Forums saved as a draft will not be available to site participants.

## Post a Message:

**Step 1:** From the Forums tool, click the title of the topic for which you'd like to post a message.

**Step 2:** Click [\[Post New Thread\]](#). The Compose Forum Message screen will open.

**Step 3:** Next to Title, type the subject/title of your message.

**Step 4:** Under Message, use the editor to compose your message.

**Step 5:** Under Attachments, you can attach a file from your local computer or from Resources.

**Step 6:** Click [\[Post Message\]](#) to post your message or [\[Cancel\]](#) to cancel your message without saving.

## Reply to a Message or Topic:

To reply to a message that addresses a discussion forum topic, follow these steps:

**Step 1:** In your site's menubar, click [\[Forums\]](#) then click the title of the desired topic you want to reply to.

**Step 2:** Click the subject of the desired message.

**Step 3:** Click [\[Reply to Thread\]](#) or [\[Reply\]](#) to respond to the participants message. Click [\[Reply to Thread\]](#) to reply to the thread the discussion belongs to. Click [\[Reply\]](#) to respond to the current message you are viewing.

**Step 4:** Next to Reply Title, give your reply a title.

**Step 5:** Under Message, use the editor to compose your reply. To insert the original message to which you are replying, click [\[Insert Original Message\]](#) located above the text editor.

**Step 6:** Under Attachments, you can attach a file from your local computer or from Resources.

**Step 7:** Click [\[Post Message\]](#) to post your message or [\[Cancel\]](#) to cancel your message without saving.

## Moderate a Forum:

Moderating a forum allows the instructor the ability to grant or deny a participant's posting.

**Step 1:** In your site's menubar, click [\[Forums\]](#).

**Step 2:** At the top of the screen, click [\[Pending Messages\]](#). The number in the parentheses is the number of messages you have waiting.

**Step 3:** Check the box next to the message you would like to moderate, and choose [\[Deny\]](#) or [\[Approve\]](#). You will be returned to the Pending Messages page to continue moderation.

**NOTE:** To include a comment when you're denying a message, click the subject of the message and deny the message. At this point, you will have the opportunity to add a comment.

## Mark a Message as Read:

If you would like to mark an individual message as being read or viewed simply click on the envelope icon next to the posting.

## Notifications:

To see if someone has added a new message or forum posting to one of your sites, go to your Home page in My Workspace. Under Messages and Forums Notifications, you'll find a list of your sites, and the number of new messages and forum postings for each. If there are no new messages or forum postings, you'll see None beside your site.

## Grade a Participant's Message:

**NOTE: Before following these directions you must first create a gradebook item. Only those with the appropriate permissions may grade participant messages. Please view the gradebook documentation if you need help adding a gradebook item.**

- Step 1:** In your site's menubar, click [\[Forums\]](#).
- Step 2:** Under Forums, click the title of the desired topic.
- Step 3:** Click on the thread you wish to grade and then click [\[Other Actions\]](#) then [\[Grade\]](#). You may also click on the individual message itself and click [\[grade\]](#).
- Step 4:** Enter a point value for a grade, and then use the drop-down list to select the assignment for which you're posting the grade.
- Step 5:** Add comments in the comments text box to send private feedback to the participant.
- Step 6:** Click [\[Submit Grade\]](#) or [\[Cancel\]](#) to exit without saving.

## Create a Forum or Topic for a Specific Group:

You must FIRST create your groups using the Manage Groups tool in Site Info. Follow these steps to create a group:

- Step 1:** Click [\[Site Info\]](#) in the site you wish to create the group in.
- Step 2:** Click [\[Manage Groups\]](#).
- Step 3:** Click [\[Add\]](#). Enter a title for the group, such as Group 1. If you would like to add a description of the group, such as the names of the other group members, please add it to the description field.
- Step 4:** Choose the members for each group by clicking on their names from the Site Member list.
- Step 5:** Click [\[Add to group\]](#).
- Step 6:** Click [\[Update\]](#) at the bottom of the screen.

Once you have created your groups, you must now go into the forums tool and create a Forum and Topic for the group. The only people that will be allowed to see the forum and topic will be the group you give permissions to see it.

Please follow these steps to change the permission levels for Forums and Topics:

**NOTE: You must follow these steps for each forum and topic you create for groups!**

**Step 1:** Click [Forums]

**Step 2:** Create a new Forum.

**Step 3:** In the permissions area of the new forum click on the student role if you are working in a course site or access if you are working in a project site. Remove ALL checkmarks in the boxes for the student/access role (depending on site type). Removing the checkmarks effectively takes away all permissions for that role thereby not allowing the role to see the particular forum or select none from the permission level drop box.

**Step 4:** You must now give the group you want to access the forum permission to do so. In the permissions area of the new forum click on the group's name you wish to view the forum and topic.

**Step 5:** Make sure to place checkmarks in the boxes next to the New Response, Response to Response, and Read boxes.

**Step 6:** Add your topic to the forum.

**Step 7:** You will have to follow the above directions to change permissions when you create your topic. Remember, you MUST follow these steps for EACH forum AND topic you create for a group.

For questions, contact ETC Support at 245.5566. You can also email us at [tracs@txstate.edu](mailto:tracs@txstate.edu)

For the TRACS website home page, go to: <http://tracs.txstate.edu/portal/login>

If your login fails and you need help with your Net ID or password, contact ITAC at 245.4822.