



Create Group Discussions

You can create formal groups of students to collaborate on course work, and provide each group with its own group area. You can include links to group tools to help students collaborate and communicate. For example, you can create a special group discussion board, available only to the members of a course group.

Group discussion boards are separate from the regular course discussion board, which is available to all course members. Members of a group can create and manage their own forums.

You assign students to groups, providing each group with a problem or situation to explore and develop into a class presentation. The groups can use the chat tool and their group discussion boards to come to consensus about topic choices. They can also use their group discussion boards to post internet source links, and then members can post replies on their value. Also, they can use the group discussion board to divide up tasks and refine the outline. Members post portions of the presentation, and all members post replies regarding usefulness, grammar, flow, and for agreement on the final product.

How to Enable Group Discussions

When you create a course group, enable the discussion board tool to help groups collaborate and communicate.

1. On the Create Group page, select the check box for Discussion Board in the Tool Availability section.
2. Click Submit.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for a group named "Global Warming 1". On the left, a navigation menu for "Introduction to Oceanography" includes sections for "Course Updates", "Getting Started", "Week 1: People", "Week 2: History", "Discussions", "Groups", "My Grades", and "Tools". Under "My Groups", "Global Warming 1" is selected, with a sub-menu listing "Collaboration", "File Exchange", "Group Blog", "Group Discussion Board" (highlighted with an orange box), "Group Journal", and "Group Wiki". On the right, the "Global Warming 1" group page is displayed, featuring a "Group Properties" section with a description: "You will work together to complete a presentation." and a list of members: Ashby Cooper, Alyssa Dubois, Andy Farrell, Bruce Lopez, and Javier Perez. Below this is the "Group Tools" section, where "Group Discussion Board" is also highlighted with an orange box. Other tools listed include Collaboration, File Exchange, Group Blog, Group Journal, Group Tasks, Group Wiki, and Send Email. At the bottom, there is a "Group Assignments" section with "Group Presentation Guidelines".

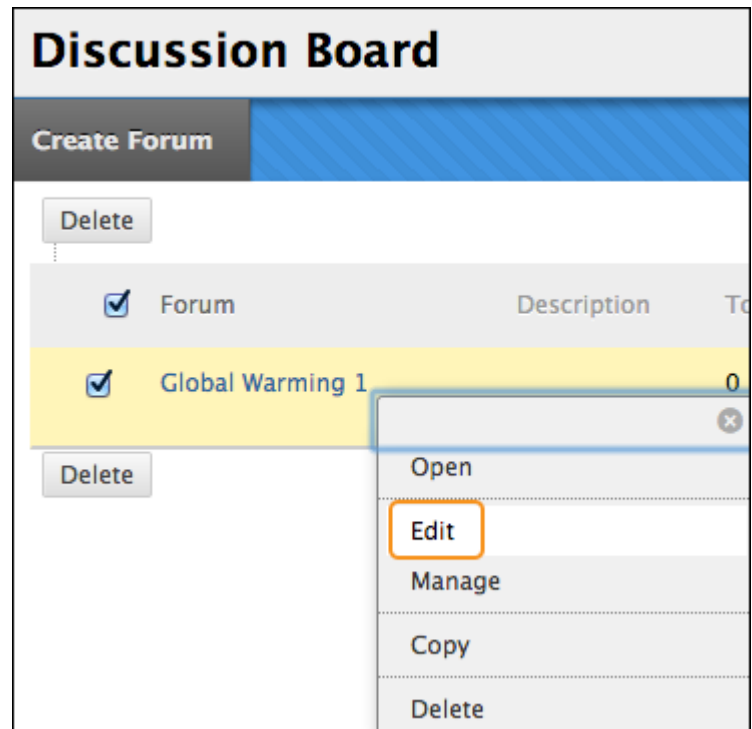
The Group Discussion Board tool appears in the My Groups section and on the group homepage.

How to Make Group Discussions Unavailable

You cannot delete a group discussion board without deleting the group, but you can make the tool unavailable. Existing posts are not removed—just made unavailable until you make the group discussion board available again.

When you make a graded group discussion board unavailable, the grade column associated with that group discussion board remains in the Grade Center.

1. On the Control Panel, expand the Users and Groups section and click Groups.
2. Change Edit Mode to ON. On the Groups page, access the group's contextual menu and click Edit.
3. On the Edit Group page, clear the check box for Discussion Board in the Tool Availability section.
4. Click Submit.



When members access their group homepage or the My Groups section, the link to the group discussion board no longer appears. You can make the tool available again at any time.

How to Edit the Settings for Group Discussions

Each new group discussion board contains a default forum titled with the group's name. You and all assigned group members can edit the forum name and provide a description.

If you want to grade participation in a group discussion board, you can edit a forum's settings and enable grading in the forum or threads. Unlike other graded group activities, when you set a group discussion board to graded, each member is graded independently of other group members. Each group member must make the designated number of posts to earn his or her own grade. You do not assign a group grade for contributions to the group discussion board.

1. On the Control Panel, expand the Course Tools section and click Discussion Board.
2. On the Discussion Board page, the course discussion board and all group discussion boards appear. Click a group discussion board link.
3. On the next Discussion Board page, access the forum's contextual menu and click Edit.

4. On the Edit Forum page, change the Name, provide a Description, and edit the Forum Availability and Forum Settings. If you want to grade the group's posts, you can enable grading for the forum or threads and type the Points possible.

If you provided a description, it appears in the Description column on the group discussion board page.

You or any group member can create more forums.