Discussion Boards/Forums

How to use and get the best out of

Blackboard 9.1, Service Pack 8

Learning Services • Learning Technology Development

Edge Hill University

Introduction

Discussion Boards or Forums have been used in Education since the very early days of Virtual Learning Environments and are still the most popular tool used to allow students to converse asynchronously (not all at the same time).

This guide will take you through how to use and get the best out of the discussion tool if your tutor has enabled it in your course.
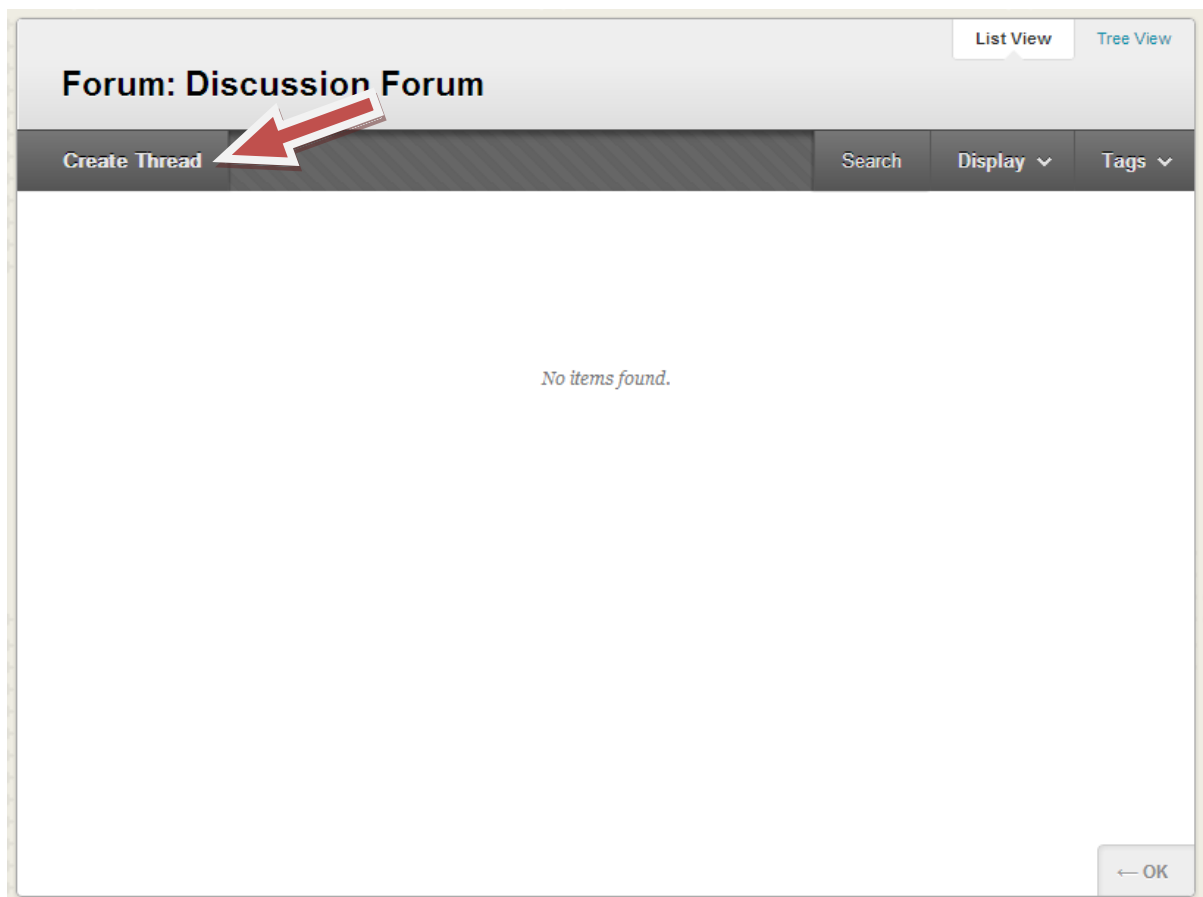
How to…

When you first visit a discussion forum, your tutor may, or may not have created a thread to get you started on the discussion.
If you wish to start a new 'thread' (as it is known) then follow these instructions.
In the top left hand corner click on '**Create Thread**'.

You will be presented with the following page:
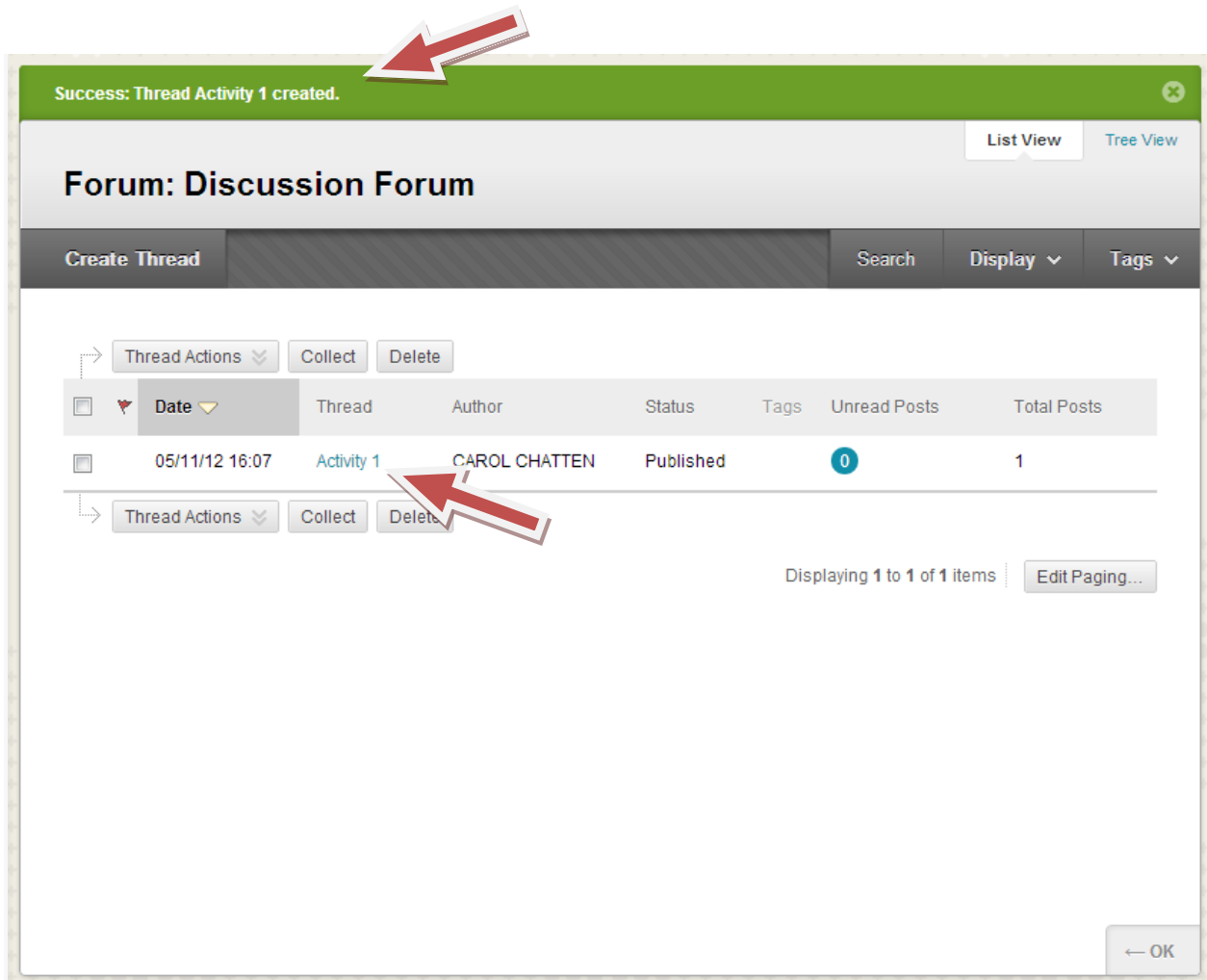
1. Give the thread a name (**Subject**).

2. You can then choose to enter a **Message** (your response to the activity that was set).

3. Click '**Submit**'.

You should now see a green tab across the top of the page saying the thread has been successfully created.

To respond to a thread that has already been created, **click on its title** i.e. 'Activity 1'.

Thread Detail

| | Search | Alignments | Refresh |

Activity 1   **Reply**   ①   ⬇ ➖ ⧉   ④

Total Posts: 1   Unread Posts: 0   ②

Message Actions ⌄ Collect		
Select: All None		
☐ **Activity 1**	CAROL CHATTEN	05/11/12 16:16
Select: All None		
Message Actions ⌄ Collect		

③

| < Activity 1 > | | **Reply** **Quote** **Edit** **Set Flag** **Delete** | ⑤
|---|---|---|
| Author: | CAROL CHATTEN | Total views: 6 (Your views: 6) |
| Posted Date: | Monday, 5 November 2012 16:07:42 o'clock GMT | |
| Edited Date: | Monday, 5 November 2012 16:16:17 o'clock GMT | |

I think that....

< Activity 1 >		**Reply** **Quote** **Edit** **Set Flag** **Delete**

← OK

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1 Clicking this button allows you to reply to the top level message (the first message posted.

2 Clicking this button allows you to see all the messages (that you have selected using the select all/none options) on one page.

3 Using these buttons (< >) you can navigate between messages one at a time in order.

4 ⬇ ➖ ⧉ These buttons allow you to change the view of the page. The first one swaps the message box up or down on the page. The second one minimises the message thread box. The third box maximises or minimises the page.

5 Various combinations of these buttons appear **depending on the settings set by the tutor.**
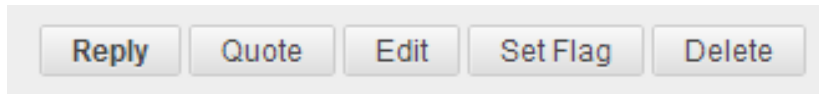
- **Reply** allows you to reply to the message currently selected/opened in the top/bottom window (depending on your settings).
- **Quote** allows you to quote the message that you are currently reading in your reply.
- **Edit** allows you to edit your message (you cannot edit others' messages).
- **Set Flag** creates a marker on the open message so you can return to it quickly in the future.
- **Delete** allows you to delete your message (you may not be allowed to delete your message if you have replies.

If your tutor has not enabled you to be able to delete a message, you can still request for it to be removed if you would like to change it or if you posted in the wrong place. Contact your tutor and they can do this for you.

Replying to a message

Replying to a message is similar to starting a thread

1. You will need to enter a **Subject** (it will automatically start with **RE:** like in an email).

2. You can then enter your **reply/message.**

3. You can also at this stage attach any files that you think are useful or supplement your **reply/message**.

4. You can then choose to **Submit** your message, **Cancel** the message, or **Save as Draft**. If you save as draft it will not be visible to other users until you **Submit** it fully.

Reply to Post

* Indicates a required field.

[Cancel] [Save Draft] [Submit]

1. Message

View Original Post

* Subject: RE: Activity 1

Message

Path: p   Words:0

2. Attachments

Attach File   [Browse My Computer] [Browse Course]

3. Submit

[Cancel] [Save Draft] [Submit]

Your reply will then appear in the 'branch' of the conversation.
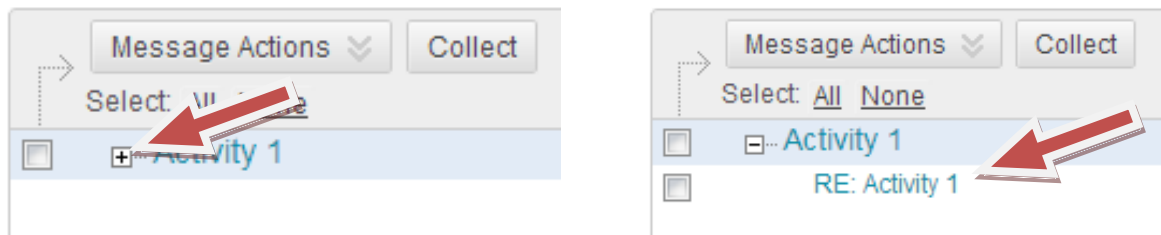
Message Actions ⌄	Collect		
Select: All None			
☐ ⊟ Activity 1	CAROL CHATTEN	05/11/12 16:16	
☐ RE: Activity 1	CAROL CHATTEN	06/11/12 09:45	

Select: All None

Message Actions ⌄	Collect

If you cannot see your reply (or others' replies), ensure you have fully 'expanded' the thread. Click on the **+** to expand.
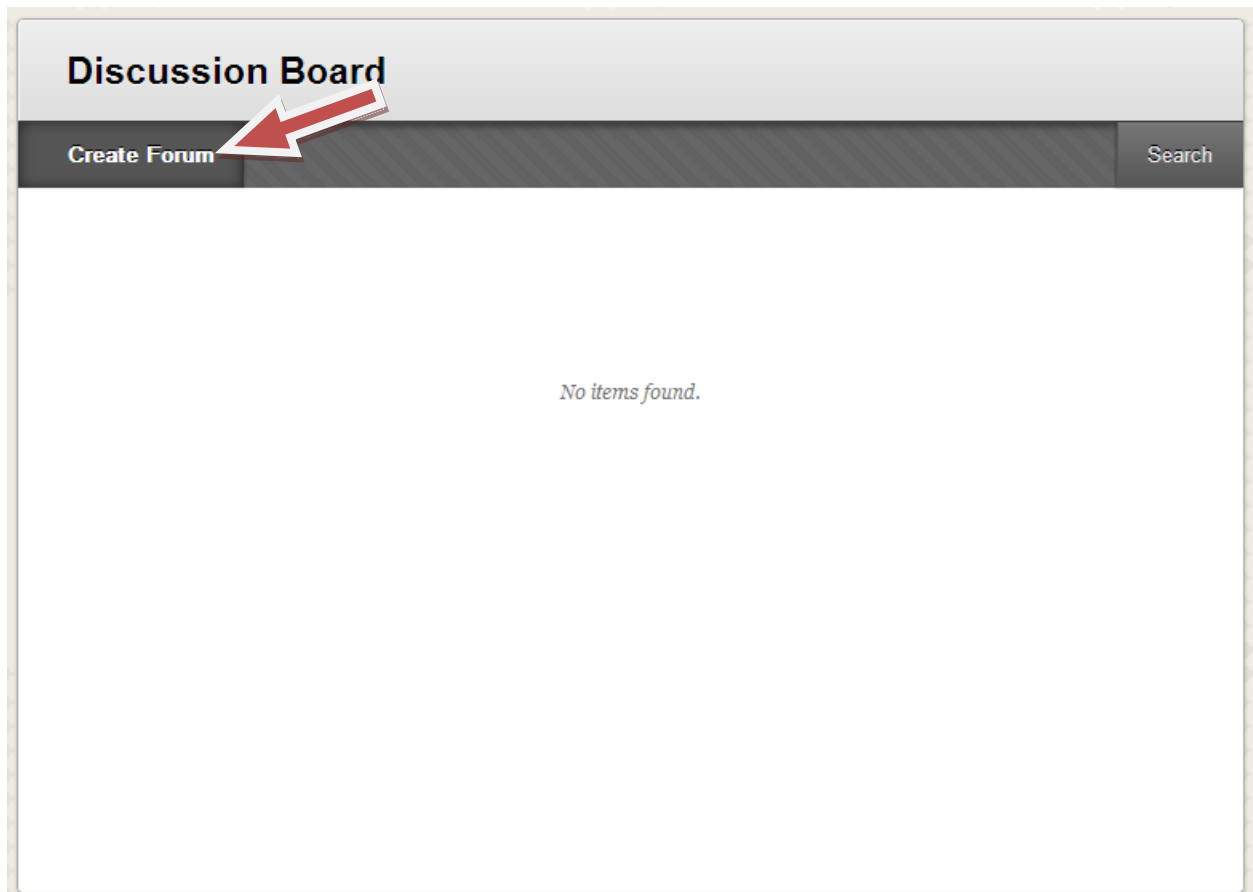

Create a Forum

In some cases, especially where groups and group tools are being used (group discussion forums) you may be expected to start off a Forum. The following steps tell you how to get started.

If your tutor has allowed it and if the tutor hasn't started a forum, you will need to start one. Click on '**Create Forum'** to begin.

The following page will appear:

Enter a **Name** for the Forum; this may be the name of the activity or something generic like 'Activity 1'.

There is then space for a description.

<p style="text-align: center"><strong style="color: red">NB – THIS IS NOT WHERE YOU POST YOUR REPLY!</p>

In the **Description** box you may wish to add the instructions from the activity that has been set, or summarise what will be discussed within the forum.

Click '**Submit**' when you are ready.

Your new forum has been created. **Click on to the forum name to enter it** and create a new thread (as per instructions earlier in this guide).

Last note, if you believe that you should be able to see a discussion forum somewhere in your module or course, but can't find it, ask you tutor where they have put it in the course; it may be that it's still hidden or in a specific location.

Other Sources of Help and support for Students

- **The ![help icon] 'Help' function within Learning Edge**
  Click the 'Help' link near the 'My Places' link at the top of the Learning Edge page to access 'Blackboard Help for Students'.

- **Learning Services Helpdesk**
  Contact the Learning Services Helpdesk if you need further assistance or have any further queries.

  Visit a helpdesk in person: at the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and the Learning innovation Centre (LINC) - Ormskirk, Learning Resource Centre (LRC) - Woodlands or the Learning & Information Resource Centre (LIRC) – Aintree.

  Telephone: 01695 584286

  Email: lsdesk@edgehill.ac.uk

LTD4030
Version: 1
Date: Nov 2012

If you require this information in an alternative format, please contact Learning Technology Development, on 01695 650754 or email ltdsupport@edgehill.ac.uk