Brightspace Learning Environment 10.6+

Collaboration and Communication - Instructor Guide

Contents

Document Change History

This version of the document replaces all previous versions. The following table describes the most recent changes to this document

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
July 7, 2016	Added topic *Copy a discussion thread with replies*.
June 2, 2016	Updated *Group enrollment types* topic to include new Single user, member-specific group type.
	Added *Getting started with discussions* section to the Discussions chapter.
May 5, 2016	Updated topics *Assessment methods available for a discussion*, *Configure a topic for assessment* with content on Sum of post scores.
	Updated topics *Assess users in discussion threads* and *Assign scores to users from the Assess Topic page* to reflect the automatic transfer of the overall score to the topic score and the clear override functionalities.
	Updated topic *Group enrollment types* to include information about unenrollment and Groups of # scenarios.
March 3, 2016	Added a *Best practices for using Discussions* topic
February 4, 2016	Minor updates to topics *Configure a topic for assessment* and *Link a discussion assessment to a grade item* to specify numeric grade items only can be associated with discussion topics.
January 7, 2016	Added a new topic *Score rubrics associated with topic posts*.
September 3, 2015	Updated *Create a group category*, *Group enrollment types*, *Set up self-enrollment in groups*, and *Best practices for group enrollment*
	Added a new topic *Restore at Deleted Announcements item*.
June 4, 2015	Updated Assessing users in discussion threads.
May 7, 2015	Initial Release

The content in this guide is applicable to the most recent version of Brightspace Learning Environment unless otherwise noted.

Blog

Create a blog

Use the Blog tool to post and respond to questions, engage in discussions, and share opinions and comments with other users. You can create private blog entries, or choose to make public entries for other users to view.

The Blog tool has three main areas:

- **My Blog** for creating and maintaining your own blog.

- **Blog Watch** for reading other users' blogs.

- **Blog List** for setting up which other users' blogs you want to follow or read.

From the My Blog page or the Blog Watch page, you can change the following settings for your blog on the ⚙ **Settings** page.

Setting	Description
Show a link to your user profile from your blog	Allow users who are viewing your blog to also view your profile
Make entries public by default	Selects the Make Public option for new blog entries so they are automatically shared with other users by default.
Allow comments by default	Selects the Allow comments option for new blog entries by default. Note that this option is only available if the Make entries public by default option is selected.
Receive email when comments are added	Select this option to receive an email notification when a new comment is made on one of your blog entries.
Allow blog to be read by anyone	Allow users who are not logged into Brightspace Learning Environment to view your blog through an external URL. The External URL field contains the URL to share your blog. Note that private blog entries are not accessible by URL.
Publish your blog as an RSS feed	Allow readers of your blog to link to your Site Feed and view your blog using an external RSS aggregator. To publish your blog in this way, you must enter a title for it in the Feed Title field.
Persistence	Enter a value in the Persistence field to determine how long blog entries stay in your Blog Watch list. For example, if you enter 10, entries will remain in your Blog Watch for 10 days after being posted. If you set the value to 0, blog entries remain in your Blog Watch indefinitely.

Write a blog entry

1. On the My Blog page, click **New Entry**.
2. Enter a title. The title appears in the blog entry list after you publish it.
3. Add content to your blog.
4. If you want to allow other users to view your blog entry, select **Make entry public**.
5. If you want to allow other users to comment on your blog entry, select **Allow Comments**.

6. If you want the blog entry to show a different date from the current date and time, change the **Entry Date**. To revert to the default values, click **Now**. The Blog displays the most recent entries first, according to the entry date you set.

7. Click **Save**.

After you create your blog entry, click **Preview** to view your blog as it appears to others and to view the permalink and social media links to share your blog outside of your course.

View your own blog

1. On the My Blog page, use the **All Entries**, **Public Entries**, and **Private Entries** tabs to view your blog entries.

2. To view how your blog appears to others, click **Preview Blog**.

Tip: The Permalink field at the top of the Preview page lists a URL for your blog that can be accessed from any browser.

Edit blog entries

1. On the My Blog page, from the context menu beside the title of the entry you want to edit, click 🖊 **Edit**.

2. Update the entry as desired.

3. Click **Save**.

Add blog comments

1. In the blog entry you want to comment on, click the **Add Comment** link. The writer must enable comments on their blog in order for you to see the **Add Comment** link.

2. In the **Comment** field, enter your comment. Select **Make this comment anonymous** to submit an anonymous comment.

3. Click **Save Comment**.

Delete blog comments

You can remove comments on your own blog. You cannot delete comments on another user's blog.

1. On the My Blog page, click 🖊 **Edit** from the context menu of the blog entry or click the **Comments** link inside the entry.

2. Click the 🗑 **Delete** icon beside the comment.

Find and follow other users' blogs

The Blog Watch keeps a list of blogs by your peers and other users that you want to follow. To populate your Blog Watch, you add blogs from the Blog List. Your Blog Watch is empty by default.

1. Click **Blog List**.

2.   Do one of the following:

   - Search for a user's blog by entering any portion of their first or last name in the **Search For** field.

   - Navigate the list of users. You can sort the table by clicking any of the column names. If you go to a new page, you lose the users that you selected on the previous page.

3.   Select the check box beside any user that you want to watch.

4.   Click 🖳 **Add**.

To see recent posts from the blogs that you follow, click **Blog Watch**.

Set up RSS feeds

You can publish your blog as an RSS feed which any external news reader (RSS aggregator) can read. Depending on your organization, you might not have permission to use the RSS feed functionality.

1.   Click ⚙ **Settings**, then select **Publish your blog** as an RSS feed.

2.   Enter a title and a description.

3.   Click **Save**.

4.   Share the External URL with other users to share your blog.

Chat

Change your chat settings

1.   On the navbar, click 💬 **Chat**.

2.   Do one of the following:

   - On the **Chat List** page, click ⚙ **Settings**.

   - Inside a chat, click ⚙ **Settings**.

3.   In the **Alias** field, enter a new alias. Depending on your permissions, you can change your alias, or chat name, if you want to appear as a different name, such as a nickname, to other chat participants.

4.   Select the check boxes for **Bold** or **Italics**.

5.   Set an **Alias Color**.

6.   If you want to change the message order, select **New to Old** or **Old to New**. If you want to see new messages only, select **New Messages**. This requires you to manually refresh the screen, to see new messages and remove all old ones. You can change back to see all messages, which restores all messages for that session, even if they were not visible while New Messages was selected.

7. You can change your sound settings so you can hear a sound when someone enters the chat, leaves the chat, or when there is an incoming message. Select a sound from the following drop-down lists:

   - Incoming Message Sound

   - Person Enters Chat Sound

   - Person Leaves Chat Sound

8. Click **Save**.

Manage chat history

The chat's archive stores each chat session, where you can view it at a later time.

The system archives a chat session once all chat members leave the room or after more than 20 minutes of inactivity. Chats appear in the Chat Sessions list.

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Chat**.

2. On the Chat List page, from the context menu beside the chat you want to view, click 🕔 **View Sessions**.

3. In the **Start Date** column, click the link.

4. When you are done reviewing the session, click **Done**.

Personal and general chats

There are two types of chats:

- **Personal chats** - Personal chats are private and visible only to users who you have added to the chat's participants list. Personal chats are ideal for keeping in touch with friends and colleagues or for clubs and other groups whose members do not share a single org unit. Anyone with the proper permissions can create personal chat rooms.

- **General (course) chats** - General chats are public chats visible to everyone enrolled in the org unit where they are created. Instructors can create general chat rooms to incorporate chat discussions into the teaching of a course since they are automatically open to all users enrolled in the course.

Create a general chat

General chats exist within specific org units and are only accessible from the org unit in which they are created.

All users in the org unit have access to the general chat. You can create multiple chats for the same org unit, such as "Midterm Review" and "Final Review." It is a good idea to enter a description to help other users identify the chat, since they might have access to other chats with similar names.

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Chat**.

2. On the **Chat List** page, click **New Chat**.

3. Enter a title.

4. Click **General Chat**.

5. Enter a description of the chat.

6. Click **Create**.

Create a personal chat

You can create personal chats to talk with peers or other friends at your organization. You can create personal chats from any org unit, and you can access them within any other org unit.

Personal chat rooms can only be accessed by users who have been added to the personal chat's Participant List. When users are added, the chat room displays under Personal Chats in their list of chats.

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Chat**.

2. On the **Chat List** page, click **New Chat**.

3. Enter a title.

4. Click **Personal Chat**.

5. Enter a description of the chat. Give your chat a unique, descriptive name and provide a description for it using the Description field to help users distinguish the chat from other chats they are enrolled in.

6. Click **Create**.

Add or remove users from a chat

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Chat**.

2. On the **Chat List** page, from the context menu of the personal chat you want to modify, click 👥 **View Members**.

3. Do one of the following:

   - To add a member to the chat, click **Add Members**. To add users from different course offerings click **Select Different Course**. Select the check box beside the name of users you want to add. Click **Add** > **Done**.

   - To add a personal contact, click **Add Personal Contact**. Select the check box beside the name of users you want to add. Click **Add** > **Done**.

   - To delete a member of the chat, on the Chat Members page, select the check box beside the users you want to remove. Click **Delete** > **Done**.

Classlist

Enroll a new user

1. On the navbar, click 🔲 **Classlist**.

2. From the **Add Participants button**, select **Create and enroll a new user**.

3. Fill in the user's information.

4. If you want to send the user an enrollment email, select the **Send Enrollment email** check box .

5. Click **Enroll**.

Enroll users from a TXT or CSV file

1. On the navbar, click 📇 **Classlist**.

2. From the **Add Participants** button, select **Import users from a file on your computer**.

3. If you want to ensure your file meets import criteria, download the **Sample Text File** .

4. To search and select the file you want to import, click **Browse**.

5. If you want to send an enrollment email **to new users** and/or **to existing users**, select the check boxes in the **Import Options** section.

6. Click **Import**.

Unenroll users

1. On the navbar, click 📇 **Classlist tool**.

2. Select the users you want to unenroll.

3. Click 👤 **Unenroll**.

Impersonate a user

A user can impersonate another user from the Classlist tool. For example, it would be beneficial to impersonate a user when submitting a quiz on their behalf. The ability to enable user impersonation is set in the Users tool's permissions. Contact your administrator for more details.

1. On the navbar, click 📇 **Classlist**.

2. From the context menu of the user you want to impersonate, click 👥 **Impersonate**.

Check user progress

Your view of the User Progress tool may differ depending on whether you access the User Progress tool from the org level or the org unit level, as well as depending on your roles and permissions.

1. On the navbar, click 📇 **Classlist**.

2. From the context menu of the user you want to view, click 📊 **View Progress**.

3. To view progress on a specific progress indicator, click the indicator from the **Reports List** area. The report will display in the **Report Details** area.

4. Click the expandable and collapsible links to expand or collapse the report details.

Why are tabs important in the Classlist tool?

Classlist tabs generally correspond to specific roles. A tab can show all roles, one role, or a combination of roles. Your administrator may have given you permission to control which tabs to display in your classlist.

The tabs you choose to display will be visible to students when they view your classlist. Therefore, if there is a particular role that you do not want students to see in the classlist, you can choose to not have it appear there.

Set which tabs appear in Classlist

1. From the navbar, click **Classlist**.

2. On the **Classlist** page, click **Settings**.

3. From the drop-down list in the **Display** column, select **Yes** or **No** for the tab you want to show or hide on your **Classlist** page.

4. Click **Save**.

What is an auditor?

An auditor in Brightspace Learning Environment is a user with permission to see (audit) another user's information in the User Progress tool, which enables them to view:

- Grades tool
- Quizzes activity
- Discussions activity
- Content viewing activity
- Assignments activity
- Login history
- Checklist completion
- Competencies achievement

This feature is useful if you want to grant access to parents to view and monitor their children in a specific course offering.

Note: You should place the **Auditors** widget on the organization homepage so that auditors can access the information on the users they audit. Only users with permission for auditing, and existing auditor relationships can see this widget.

Enroll or unenroll an auditor

1. On the navbar, click ![icon] **Classlist**.

2. On the **Classlist** tool page, from the context menu of the user you want to add auditors to, click ![icon] **Manage User Auditors** .

3. To create or delete multiple auditors with a TXT file, click **Add Auditors**, or **Bulk Auditor Management**.

4. Select the users you want to add as auditors. To delete the auditor, select the check box beside the user and click ![icon] **Delete**.
    To select users you want to add auditees to, click the **Users {user} audits** tab on the **Manage Auditors** page.

5. Click **Add**.

Discussions

Getting started with discussions

Create a discussion forum

Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the navbar, click ![icon] **Discussions**.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the **New** button drop-down menu, click **New Forum**.

3. Enter a title for your new forum.

4. Enter a description for your new forum.

5. Under **Options**, select any of the following check boxes:

    *   **Allow anonymous posts** - to enable users to post anonymously.

    *   **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum** - to ensure that posts are approved by a moderator before they display in the forum.

    *   **Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic** - to ensure user participation.

    *   **Display forum descriptions in topics** - to provide instructors the option to display a discussion forum description within a discussion topic description.

6. Under **Availability**, select **Visibility** options for your forum.

7. Select **Locking Options** for your forum. Locking your forum prevents users from accessing it until it is unlocked.

8. Click **Save and Close**.

Create a discussion topic

Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Discussions**.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the **New** button, click **New Topic**.

3. From the drop-down list, select the **Forum** you want to place your topic in. If you want to create a new forum for your topic, click **New Forum**.

4. Enter your New Topic Details.

5. Select Availability options for your topic.

6. Select Locking Options for your topic. Locking your topic prevents users from accessing it until it is unlocked.

7. Click **Save and Close**.

Create a discussion thread

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Discussions**.

2. Click the topic where you want to create a thread.

3. Click **Start a New Thread**.

4. Enter a subject.

5. Enter your post.

6. Set any of the following posting options:

   - To keep the thread at the top of the list, select **Pin Thread**.

   - To post anonymously, select **Post as Anonymous**.

   - To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread.**

   - To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area, click **Browse** to locate the file that you want to attach.

   - To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio** > **Record**. To make adjustments to your microphone selection and volume, click **Flash Settings**. To listen to your recording, click **Play**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. If you have prerecorded audio and are using a supported browser, you can drag audio files onto the attachments upload target.

   - To attach a video recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Video** > **Allow** > **Record**. When you finish recording, click **Stop**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. To add the recording, click **Add**. If you have pre-recorded video and are using a supported browser, you can drag video files onto the attachments upload target.

   - To post your thread to more than one topic, click **Post to other topics**. Click **Add Topics.** Select the topics that you want your thread to appear in. To post in every topic simultaneously, select the **Select All** check box and then click **Add Topics**.

7. Click **Post**. If the topic is moderated, your post will not appear until a moderator approves it.

Reply to a discussion thread

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.

2. Locate the thread you want to reply to.

3. Do either of the following:

    - To reply to the main thread post, click **Reply to Thread**.

    - To reply to a particular post inside the thread, or click **Reply**.

4. Enter your reply in the HTML Editor. To include the original post's text in your reply, click the **Add original post text** link. (If this option is already enabled by your course administrator, this message will not display.)

5. Set any of the following options:

    - To post anonymously, select **Post as Anonymous**.

    - To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread.**

    - To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area, click **Browse** to locate the file you want to attach.

    - To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio** > **Record**. To make adjustments to your microphone selection and volume, click **Flash Settings**. To listen to your recording, click **Play**. To erase your recording, click **Clear**. If you have pre-recorded audio and are using a supported browser, you can drag audio files onto the attachments upload target.

    - To attach a video recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Video** > **Allow** > **Record**. When you finish recording, click **Stop**. Click **Clear** to erase your recording or **Add** to add the recording. If you have pre-recorded video and are using a supported browser, you can drag video files onto the attachments upload target.

6. Click **Post**.

Subscribe to a discussion

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.

2. Do either of the following:

    - On the **Discussions List** page, from the context menu of the forum or topic you want to receive notifications of new posts for, click **Subscribe**.

    - On the **View Topics** page, beside the thread you want to receive notifications for, click **Subscribe**.

3. In the **Customize Notifications** pop-up window, select your **Notification Method**. If you do not have an email address set up in your user profile to receive notifications, in the **Customize Notifications** pop-up window, click the **Add an email address in a new window** link. Click the **Enable email notifications** link, then set your email preferences in the **Email Settings** pop-up window. Click **Save**.

4. Click **Subscribe**.

Unsubscribe from notifications

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. Do either of the following:

    -   From the context menu of the forum or topic you are subscribed to, click ☆ **Unsubscribe.**

    -   Beside a thread you are subscribed to, click ★ **Subscribed**.

3. In the confirmation pop-up window, click **Yes**.

Restrict a forum or topic to specific groups or sections

Using topic or forum restrictions, you can create discussion areas where members of a group or section can collaborate on assignments or discuss course material in small teams. You can also use restrictions to create separate forums or topics for each group or section in a course offering.

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the context menu of the forum or topic you want to restrict, click ✏ **Edit**.

3. In the **Restrictions** tab, select the **Restrict this <forum/topic> to the following groups and sections** check box.

4. Click **Add Groups and Sections**.

5. Select the groups or sections you want to add, then click **Add**.

6. To remove a specific group or section's access, click the ✖ **Remove** icon for the group or section.

To open the forum or topic to everyone again, clear the **Restrict this <forum/topic> to the following groups and sections** check box.

Restrict multiple forums or topics to specific groups or sections

After you have created groups or sections, you can restrict access to a forum or topic using your groups or sections. Restricting forums or topics enables you to create discussion areas where members of a group or section can collaborate on assignments or discuss course materials in small groups. You can also use create separate forums for specific groups or sections in a course offering.

1. Click **Group and Section Restrictions** from the tool navigation.

2. Select your **View Options**.

3. In the Edit Restrictions area, select the **Restricted** check box for any forum or topic you want to restrict, then select the check box for any group or section you want to have access to the forum or topic. To open a forum or topic to everyone, clear the **Restricted** check box.

Automatically create restricted topics for groups or sections

You can automatically create a discussion topic for each group or section in a selected category. Topics get their names from the group or section they associate with.

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. From the tool navigation, click **Group and Section Restrictions**.

3. Click the **Automatically create restricted topics** link.

4. Select a **Group or Section Category** and the **Forum** where you want to create your topics. If you want to create a new forum, click **New Forum**.

5. Click **Create**.

Copy a discussion thread with replies

1. In the **Discussions List** page, view the discussion topic you want to copy.

2. From the thread's context menu, click **Copy Thread**.

3. In the **Copy** pop-up window, select the **Destination Forum** and the **Destination Topic** from the respective drop-down menus.

4. Under **Copy Options**, select the **Copy replies** check box.

5. Click **Copy**.

Best practices for using Discussions

Ensure that there are discussion topics created for your discussion forum(s)

Forums are used to group topics into predetermined themes, course units, etc. You can only post in discussion topics. If there are no topics created for a forum, then students will not be able to participate in discussions.

1. On the course home page, click **Discussions**.

2. Make sure that there are topics nested under the discussion forum.

3. If you do not see topics nested under the discussion forum(s), you must create topics.

Ensure that discussion forums and topics are not unintentionally hidden

The option to hide a discussion forum or topic is located on the New Forum or New Topic page (or the Edit page for existing forums and topics), in the **Properties** tab under the **Availability** section.

If you selected **Hide this [topic or forum]**, then students won't be able to see it. If a discussion forum has this setting enabled, all of the topics nested under it will also be hidden.

Ensure that there are no unwanted date restrictions set for the discussion forum or topic

Students cannot access topics that fall outside of set date restrictions. If a discussion forum has date restrictions attached, then all topics nested under it will be hidden outside of those date restrictions.

The option to set date restrictions is located on the New Forum or New Topic page (or the Edit page for existing forums and topics), in the **Properties** tab under the **Availability** section. Select the **Forum is visible for a specific date range** check box, then fill out your start and end dates. If you want the forum or topic to be currently visible, ensure that the

End Date has not passed yet and the Start Date has already begun; if you want it to be available at a later time, set the date restrictions accordingly.

If you do not want date restrictions enabled, select **[Forum/Topic] is always visible**.

Ensure that the appropriate group restriction settings are applied

If group restrictions are enabled for the discussion forum or topic, then only students within the group selected can see the discussion.

The option to set group restrictions is located on the **New Forum** or **New Topic** page (or the **Edit** page for existing forums and topics), in the **Restrictions** tab under the **Group and Section Restrictions** section. Select **Restrict this forum to the following groups and sections** to enable group restrictions for a forum or topic.

View discussion statistics

1. On the navbar, click 🗫 **Discussions**.

2. Do one of the following:

- To view statistics for a specific forum or topic, from the context menu of the forum or topic you want to view, click
 📊 **View <Forum/Topic> Statistics**.

- To view statistics for the entire course, from the tool navigation, click **Statistics**.

Best practices for using and interpreting discussion statistics

Statistics give you an overview of user activity in your discussion topics and forums.

Only users who appear in the classlist display when viewing statistics by user; however, totals include posts by all users, including instructors.

- The Forums and Topics tab contains specific statistics you can use to determine which forums and topics stimulate conversation and which do not.

- The Users tab allows you to track which students post and reply frequently, as well as which students are not actively participating in discussions.

- As the semester unfolds, you can use statistics to pinpoint topics in need of conversation-starters.

- When the semester ends, statistics help you identify the topics that were most effective and the ones you might want to omit or modify for the next course.

- Sort statistics by clicking on any column heading.

- Post counts do not include unapproved and deleted posts.

Export discussion statistics

You can export statistics to a CSV file and then import the data into a spreadsheet application to perform further analysis.

1. On the navbar, click 🗫 **Discussions**.

2. From the tool navigation, click **Statistics**.

3. Click ⬆ **Export to CSV File**.

4. Once the file has finished processing, click the file name to download the file.

Moderating discussions

About locking discussion forums and topics

Locking a topic prevents users from creating new posts or modifying existing posts, making the conversation read only. Users with permission can modify the contents of a locked topic. Locking a topic is an effective way of closing a conversation while allowing users to refer back to posts. Consider locking a topic to end a conversation, then using a pinned summary post inside the topic. When users access the topic, your summary appears at the top.

You can specify start and end dates for when a forum or topic unlocks so you can set things up ahead of time to match your course's calendar.

Lock a discussion forum or topic

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the forum or topic you want to lock, click ✏ **Edit**.

3. Select your **Locking Options**.

4. Click **Save**.

About hidden discussion forums and topics

Hidden topics do not display on the Discussions List page, except to users with permission to see hidden forums and topics or to manage discussions. By hiding topics, you can control which topics users can access at different times throughout the course. For example, you can create weekly discussion topics for users to reflect on the material covered in each week of the course and make each topic available for one week only.

You can specify start and end dates for when a forum or topic is visible so you can set up visibility ahead of time to match your course's calendar.

Instead of scheduling a topic to disappear as soon as you want the discussion to end, consider locking the topic at that point and keeping it visible for another few days. This allows users to review the discussion after it closes so that they don't miss the last posts added.

Hide a discussion forum or topic

1. On the navbar, click 💬 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the forum or topic you want to hide, click ✏ **Edit**.

3. In the **Availability** section, select your **Visibility** options.

4. Click **Save**.

About moderated discussion topics

If a topic requires post approval or moderation, posts only appear to users with permission to approve them. You must manually approve these posts to make them visible to all users. Users with permission to approve posts in a topic can create approved posts automatically.

You can enable and disable post approval from the Properties tab when creating or editing a forum or topic. Once you enable post approval, a ⚠ Moderated notification appears beside the forum or topic name.

If a post is not appropriate for the topic and you do not want to approve it, you can do any of the following:

- Leave the post unapproved.

- Edit the post before approving it.

- Delete the post.

Moderate discussions

You must manually approve posts and threads in topics that require approval. Once you approve a post or thread, it is visible to all users. To hide the post or thread, you must unapprove it.

1. On the navbar, click 🗪 **Discussions**.

2. Do any of the following:

- Beside the post you want to approve, click the ⚠ **Approve Post** link.

- From the context menu of the post you want to approve, click 🗸 **Approve Post**.

- To approve all posts in a thread, click 🗸 **Approve All Replies in Thread**.

- From the context menu of the post you want to unapprove, click ✗ **Unapprove Post**.

- From the context menu of the thread you want to unapprove, click ✗ **Unapprove Thread**.

Assessing discussions

Assessment methods available for a discussion

The following calculation methods are available to assess discussions.

Calculation method	Definition
Average post score	This calculation method averages all of the post scores included per user.
Maximum post score	This calculation method identifies the highest score of all the post scores included per user.
Minimum post score	This calculation method identifies the lowest score of all the post scores included per user.
Mode post score - Highest on multiple	This calculation method looks at the frequency of scores on posts, then selects the highest occurrence of a score per user. Once it picks the frequency, the system looks to see if multiple scores occur at that frequency. If not, it assigns that score to the user. If there are multiple scores with the same frequency, it will choose the highest of those scores. For example, if a score of 7 occurs 2 times, a score of 8 occurs 3 times, and a score of 9 occurs 3 times, the system will choose the frequency 3 and the score of 9.
Mode post score - Lowest on multiple	This calculation method looks at the frequency of scores on posts, then selects the highest occurrence of a score per user. Once it picks the frequency, the system looks to see if multiple scores occur at that frequency. If not, it assigns that score to the user. If there are multiple scores with the same frequency, it will choose the lowest of those scores. For example, if a score of 7 occurs 2 times, a score of 8 occurs 3 times, and a score of 9 occurs 3 times, the system will choose the frequency 3 and the score of 8.
Sum of post scores	This calculation method sums up all the scores on posts within a topic.

Configure a topic for assessment

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the topic you want to configure for assessment, click ✏ **Edit Topic**.

3. In the **Assessment** tab, configure your topic for assessment by doing any the following:

- If you want your assessments to count toward the learner's Final Grade, and you want the learner to see their assessment score and feedback in the Grades tool, associate the topic to a numeric grade item. Use the **Grade Item** drop down list to attach an existing numeric grade item or click the **New Grade Item** link to create a new numeric grade item. Note that you can only associate numeric grade items with discussion topics.

- Give the topic a **Score Out Of** to evaluate the overall score of the learner's contributions to the topic.

- Click the **Add Rubric** button to attach an existing rubric or click the **Create Rubric in New Window** link to create a new rubric for the topic. You can assess a rubric for each learner in the course, and learners can view completed rubrics in **User Progress**.

- If you want to score individual posts, select the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box, then select your calculation method to allow assessment of individual posts in the topic. When this check box is not selected, you can give a single overall score to the learner for their participation.

- If you want to score all the posts within a topic, select the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box, and then select the **Sum of post scores** calculation method.

- If you select **Allow assessment of individual posts**, the **Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero** check box becomes available. When you select this check box, the system automatically assigns a score of zero to individual posts that you have not yet evaluated, and the overall score for the learner is calculated from the score of all posts, including those not evaluated with a score of zero. Selecting this check box does not affect the **Sum of post scores** option. If you do not select the **Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero** check box, posts without a score are ignored and do not factor into the overall score.

4. Click **Save and Close**.

Assess users in discussion threads

You can assess learners' participation in discussion topics from within threads for topics to which you've added an assessment.

If your topic is moderated, you must approve posts before you can assess them. To assess individual posts, you must edit the topic to enable the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box in the **Assessment** tab.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, click the topic you want to assess.

3. Depending on your view settings, do one of the following:

- In Reading view, instructors can assess an individual learner while viewing all of a learner's posts together on one screen. Click the context menu beside a thread name and select **Assess Student**.

- In Grid view, instructors can select either the thread or reply for a post. Click the **More Actions** button and then select **Assess** to assess the individual learner.

1. In the popup dialog box, do any of the following:

- If assessment of individual posts is enabled and you are in Reading View, enter a score in the Score column beside each post you want to assess. If assessment of individual posts is enabled and you are in Grid View, add the assessment in the **Post Score** field.

- If assessment of individual posts is not enabled, enter a score in the **Topic Score** field. This score is the assessment you are providing to the learner for participation in the topic.

- Complete each rubric, choosing a level and entering feedback for each criterion or choose an overall score. Note that the calculated or chosen **Overall Score** (if there is one) is automatically populated in the **Topic Score** field. Click **Clear Override** to return the **Topic Score** to the calculated score from the rubric.

- Enter feedback comments in the **General Feedback** field.

- Select the **Publish score on save** check box. This check box is only available when the topic is associated with a grade item. When you select this check box, the Topic Score or calculated topic score and comments from the **General Feedback** field are sent to Grades. When this check box is not selected, the learner's score and feedback are cleared from Grades.

2. Click **Save and Close**.

Assign scores to users from the Assess Topic page

You can assess users from inside a discussion topic while reading posts or from the **Assess Topic** page. When assessing users from the **Assess Topic** page, you can see topic scores for all users and view all of a user's posts together on one screen.

Assessable topics display an ![icon] Includes assessment icon beside the topic name on the **Discussions List** page. If you select the topic setting **A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic**, you must approve posts in the topic before you can assess them.

To assess individual posts, you must edit the topic to enable the **Allow assessment of individual posts** check box in the **Assessments** tab.

1. On the navbar, click ![icon] **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the topic you want to assess, click ![icon] **Assess Topic**. If the Score column is empty on the **Assess Topic** page, click the **Manage Columns** button, select the **Score Value** check box, and click **Save**.

3. Do one of the following:

   - In the **Users** tab, click **Topic Score** beneath the name of the user you want to assess.

   - In the **Assessments** tab, click the name of the user you want to assess.

4. In the **Topic Score Details** window, do any of the following:

   - If **Allow assessment of individual posts** is enabled, enter a value in the **Score** column beside each post you want to assess.

   - If **Allow assessment of individual posts** is not enabled, assign a value in the **Topic Score** to reflect the learner's participation in the whole topic.

- Complete each rubric with a level and feedback for each criterion.

- Enter comments in the **General Feedback** field.

5. If the topic is associated with a grade item, select the **Publish score on save** check box. When this check box is selected, the Topic Score or calculated topic score and comments from the **General Feedback** field are sent to Grades. If this check box is not selected, the learner's score and feedback are cleared from Grades.

Link a discussion assessment to a grade item

When you link a discussion topic's score to a numeric grade item in your grade book, your users' scores automatically transfer to the grade book. This enables you to factor the topic score into users' final grades for the course. It also enables you to display the result to users since users cannot view their topic score directly through the Discussions tool, but can view their grades in the grade book.

You must publish the score to the grade book in order for Brightspace Learning Environment to update the grade item. This prevents the display of inaccurate grades before you finish assessing users. When you publish the topic score, Brightspace Learning Environment updates the grade item in the grade book. Any additional changes you make to a user's score automatically release to the grade book. Note that you can only link numeric grade items to discussion topics.

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the topic you want to assess, click 📏✓ **Assess Topic**.

3. On the **Assess Topic** page, do one of the following:

- To publish scores for specific users, select the check box in the **Publish to Grades** column beside each user whose score you want to release. Click **Save**.

- To publish scores for all users, click **Publish All Scores to Grades**.

Link a discussion topic to a learning objective

Associate a topic with learning objectives to measure a user's mastery of skills, abilities, and knowledge. You can use a rubric to evaluate a user's success at meeting the learning objective.

You must have learning objectives created before you can link them to discussion topics.

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the topic you want to associate with learning objectives, click 🖉 **Edit Topic**.

3. In the **Objectives** tab, click **Associate Learning Objectives**.

4. Browse or search for the learning objectives you want to associate with the discussion topic.

5. Select the check boxes beside the learning objectives you want and click **Add Selected**.

Add an assessment to a discussion topic with a learning objective

1. On the navbar, click 🗨 **Discussions**.

2. From the context menu of the topic that contains the learning objective you want to associate with an assessment, click ✏️ **Edit Topic**.

3. In the **Objectives** tab, from the context menu of the learning objective you want to evaluate, click ➕ **Add Assessment**.

4. Click the **Select Rubric** button to attach an existing rubric or click the **Create Rubric in New Window** link to create a new rubric for the topic.

5. Select your **Criteria** from the drop-down list.

6. If you want to make the activity required, select **The activity is required to complete learning objective.** Then select a level for the rubric from the **Threshold** drop-down list.

Displaying rubric scores on the Assess Topic page

When the **Assess with Embedded Rubrics** feature is on, the View Options menu becomes available on the Assess Topic page.

The default option is **Show Topic Score**. This option displays only the **Topic Score** links. Rubrics and rubric scores do not appear on the **Assess Topic** page. This option provides a single list of topic scores that instructors can use for visual comparison across learners.

The **Show All Scores** option displays the learners' topic score s and rubric scores. This option provides the same view as when the **Assess with Embedded Rubrics** feature is disabled.

Restore deleted discussions

In order to restore deleted forums and topic, you must have the Delete and Restore Forums and Topics permission enabled. If the forum you restore contains one or more topics, you will be given the option to also restore the forum's associated topics.

In order to restore deleted threads and posts, you must have the See Deleted Posts permission and Display deleted posts option on the Settings page enabled. If the post you restore is a reply to another post, and the other post was also deleted, both posts are restored.

1. On the navbar, click 🗨️ **Discussions**.

2. Do one of the following:

- To restore a deleted forum or topic, on the **Discussions List** page, from the **More Actions** button, click 🔄 **Restore**. Click **Restore** beside the forum or topic you want to restore.

- To restore a deleted thread or post, click the 🗑️ **Restore <Thread/Post>** link in the thread or post you want to restore.

Email

Email overview

The Email tool allows you to send email from within Brightspace Learning Environment. You can also organize received mail using folders and store email addresses using the Address Book.

Disable your course address book

1. Do one of the following:

   - In the course that you want to make changes to, click **Course Admin** > **Course Offering Information**.

   - From the **Admin Tools** menu, click the **Course Management** link to search for the course that you want. Click the **Offering Name** to access the **Course Offering Information** page.

2. Clear the **Show course address book** check box.

FAQ

Create an FAQ question

1. On the navbar, click **FAQ**.

2. Do one of the following:

   - Click **New Question**, then select a **Category** from the drop-down list. If you need to create a category for the question, click **New Category.** Enter your category details. Click **Save**.

   - If you know which existing category you want to place the new question in, from the context menu of that category, click **New Question**.

3. Enter your question and answer details.

Create an FAQ category

1. On the navbar, click **FAQ**.

2. Click **New Category.**

3. Enter your category details.

Groups

Best practices for setting up groups

- If you want users to see all users and content for a course but be a part of a group for a specific project or activity, use the Groups tool. However if you want users to only see learning materials and users from their own section, use the Sections tool.

- To organize users' work on projects and assignments or to create special work areas for users with different learning needs, use the Groups tool.

- Users can belong to multiple groups within the same course.

- For each group, create separate discussion forums, Assignment submission folders, and Locker areas to work in.

- Grade members of groups individually or as a team.

- Before setting up groups, know how you want to organize them. The following factors can affect how users enroll in groups:

    - Setting groups up before or after you've enrolled users.

    - Enabling auto-enrollment in groups.

    - Enabling randomization of users in groups.

    - Enabling self-enrollment in groups.

    - The Enrollment Type you choose.

- Set up groups after the majority of users enroll in your course. This gives you a better idea of how many users you are organizing and how many groups you need. Setting up groups after enrollment can also ensure better distribution of users between groups.

- For users to enroll in groups automatically, the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** permission must be enabled. Contact your site administrator if you experience difficulties.

What happens when you move users to a new group?

Discussion posts remain in the old group and do not count towards a user's grade if the forum or topic is associated with a grade item. The user must satisfy the discussion post requirements in the new section. You can override a grade using the Grades tool.

Locker files remain in the old group. Users must add any files they want to keep to the new Locker area themselves.

Assignments submissions submitted for the old group remain with the old group. The user receives the grade achieved by the new group on any group assignment submission folders. You can change the user's grade back to the original group's mark in the Grades tool.

Best practices for group enrollment

- To illustrate best practices for group enrollment, the following scenario includes a class of 185 users.

  Your latest assignment requires users to use a software program that is only available in certain labs which must be booked and supervised. You book 4 labs that can hold 50 users each and create 4 corresponding groups.

  You select the following group options:

  For the **Enrollment Type**, you select **# of Groups** and set the **Number of Groups** to 4.
  You leave both **Auto-enroll new users** and **Randomize users in groups** cleared because new users will not be joining your course and you are not worried about having an unbiased distribution of users, since group membership will not influence users' grades.
  You select **Set up discussion areas** and create discussion forums where users can post and answer questions about the computer software.
  You leave **Set up lockers** and **Set up assignments submission folders** cleared because you do not want users collaborating on their projects and you already have your assignments organized.
  Note: On the Enroll Users page, if the option is configured, an **Advanced Search Options** link displays. Organizations can create their own custom search and enroll page using Brightspace Valence that opens in a new browser window via this link. Instructors can use this custom search and enroll page to filter students according to certain criteria, such as age or demographic data, to determine who to put into each group.

- In the following scenario, you have a class of 29 users.

  Your latest assignment requires that users research a particular topic, write a report on it, and hold a seminar for the class. You know that you want users to work in groups of 5, but you want to give them some flexibility in choosing both who they work with and what topic they work on.

  You select the following group options:

  For the **Enrollment Type**, you select **Groups of # - Self Enrollment**. You set the **Number of Users** per group to 5 and rename each of the 6 groups after the topic the group will work on.
  You select **Set up discussion areas** and create discussion topics for each of the groups. You associate the topics with a grade item and tell users that you expect them to communicate with each other on their progress and concerns in the discussions topic for their group. They receive individual grades based on their participation.
  You select **Set up lockers** and encourage users to save their collaborative work in their group Locker area.
  You select **Set up assignments submission folders** and create separate Assignment submission folders for each group's Research Notes, Report, and Seminar Notes. You associate the folders with grade items and assign the same grade to all members of the group.

Create a group category

To organize and manage related groups, use categories. For example, you can have a category for Assignment 1, Assignment 2, Seminars, Remedial Help, and Book Reviews.

Before you create a new set of groups, you must set up a category and create restricted work areas for the groups.

1. On the **Manage Groups** page, click **New Category**.

2. Enter a **Category Name** and **Description**.

3. Select an **Enrollment Type** from the drop-down list.

4. Depending on the chosen Enrollment Type, enter the **Number of Groups** to create, the **Number of Users** per group, or both.

5. To apply a distinctive prefix to each group name and code in the category, enter it in the **Group Prefix** field. If you do not fill in this field, the prefix defaults to "Group".
    Tip: Add the org unit ID to the group code to further distinguish it from other group codes. To enable this option, ask your administrator to turn on **d2l.Tools.Groups.IncludeOrgUnitIdInGroupCode**.

6. Depending on the chosen Enrollment Type, to automatically enroll users to groups, select **Auto-enroll new users**.

7. Depending on the chosen Enrollment Type, to randomly place users in groups, select **Randomize users in groups**. If you do not choose this option, users are placed alphabetically based on the Classlist.

8. If you select an Enrollment Type that supports self enrollment, to set a deadline after which learners can no longer self enroll in the group, select **Set Self Enrollment Expiry Date**.

9. If you select **Set Self Enrollment Expiry Date**, but you want all learners who do not enroll before the expiry date to be enrolled, you can select **Allocate unenrolled users after Self Enrollment Expiry Date** to automatically, randomly and evenly distribute them into the available groups.
    Note: This option will add group members beyond the capacity of groups, if applicable. The automatic enrollment recurs at a set interval after the expiry date to ensure that all learners are assigned to a group.
    Note: Enable the options in the **Create Workspace** area only after you've customized your group names. The Discussions areas will then be created with the customized group names right away, and you will not have to edit their names manually later.

10. Click **Save**.

11. To customize individual group names, click the group and enter a new Group Name.

12. Click **Save**.

13. To set up discussion areas, locker areas, and assignment submissions folders with the customized group name, from the category name's context menu, click 🖉 **Edit Category**.

14. In the **Create Workspace** area, select **Set up discussion areas**, **Set up lockers**, and/or **Set up assignment submissions folders**.

15. Click **Save**.

Create a group

1. On the navbar, click **Groups**.

2. On the **Manage Groups** page, from the **View Categories** drop-down list, select the category you want to add a group to.

3. From the context menu of the category, click **Add Group**.

4. If you do not want to use the default name provided, enter a group name.

5. If you do not want to use the default group code provided, enter a group code.

6. Enter a description for the group.

7. Click **Save**.

Group enrollment types

The following descriptions explain the enrollment type options available when creating a new category and provide conceptual information on when you should use them.

Enrollment Type Option	Description
# of Groups – No Auto Enrollments	Selecting this option creates a specified number of groups, for which you can add any number of users using the **Enroll Users** page. Use this enrollment type when you know how many groups you want to create and which users you want in each group. Select this option when you have a teaching model that divides course participants into specific learning levels or when you want to divide users by skill or interests.
Groups of #	Selecting this option creates the minimum number of groups needed to place users in groups of a specified maximum size. More groups are created when they are needed to accommodate users. In the Members column of the Groups table, capacity markers display in the form x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity. Use this enrollment type when you know how many users you want in each group. Select this option when you have assignments that require work to be divided between a specific number of users, or when you can only accommodate a set number of users in a lab or work area at one time. If users are enrolled before groups are set up and the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** option is enabled, users are added using a brick laying algorithm. For example, if a maximum group size of 5 users is chosen for a class of 23, then 5 groups are created. The first user is added to Group 1, the second to Group 2, and so on. The sixth user returns the enrollment sequence to Group 1. Groups 1, 2 and 3 have 5 users and Groups 4 and 5 have 4 users. If a new user enrolls later, they are put in Group 4. If you also enable the **Auto-enroll new users** option and all of the existing groups reach their maximum size, new users are added to a new group. Because there is no way to know how many new users will join, all new users are added to the same group until it is full. This is called a bucket-filling algorithm because the limits of one group must be met before creating another group. If users are enrolled after groups are set up, users are added to groups using a bucket-filling algorithm because there is no way for the system to determine how many groups in total are needed. For example, if a maximum group size of 5 users is chosen for a class in which 23 users eventually enroll, the first five users are added to Group 1, the sixth through tenth user to Group 2, and so on. After 23 users are enrolled, groups 1-4 have 5 users and Group 5 has 3 users. If the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** option is cleared, the minimum number of groups needed to create groups under the specified size are created with no users enrolled in them.

	If no users are enrolled in the course, one group is created. You can enroll users using the **Enroll Users** page. Note: If a learner is unenrolled from a course, and new learners enroll in the course, and the original learner re-enrolls into the course, the group the original learner was in will exceed the maximum number of learners. This is done to ensure learners are able to maintain the work they contributed to previously. If you would like to maintain a strict number of learners per group, reorganization of groups after unenrollments and re-enrollments must be done manually.
# of Groups	Selecting this option creates a specified number of groups. Use this enrollment type when you know how many groups you want to create, but want the system to place users in groups for you. Select this option when you want group membership to be indiscriminate, or when classroom, resource, or teaching assistant availability restricts the number of groups you can have. If the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** option is enabled, users are added using a brick laying algorithm, regardless of whether they enrolled before or after the groups were created. For example, if a class has 23 users and 5 groups, the first user is added to Group 1, the second to Group 2, and so on. The sixth user returns the enrollment sequence to Group 1. Groups 1, 2, and 3 have 5 users and Groups 4 and 5 have 4 users. If a new user enrolls later, they are put in Group 4. If the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** option is not enabled, the specified number of groups are created with no users enrolled in them. You can enroll users using the **Enroll Users** page.
Groups of # – Self Enrollment	Selecting this option creates the minimum number of groups needed to accommodate users in groups of a specified maximum size automatically. Users choose the group they want to enroll in from the **Groups** page. In the Members column of the Groups grid list, capacity markers display in the form x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity. Use this enrollment type when you know how many users you want in each group, but you want to allow users to choose their own groups. Select this option when you want users to choose their groups based on friendship, learning style, schedules, or geographic location. If there are no users enrolled in your course at the time of creation, then only one group is initially created. You can use the **Edit Category** page to add additional groups. Add additional groups if you want to ensure all users have options when forming groups.

# of Groups – Self Enrollment	Selecting this option creates a specified number of groups, which users enroll in from the **Groups** page.
	Use this enrollment type when you want to make a specific number of groups available for users to join. Select this option when you want to organize groups on specific topics, which users can join based on interest, or for creating groups that are responsible for specific aspects of a larger project, which users can join based on knowledge or task preferences.
# of Groups, Capacity of # – Self Enrollment	Selecting this option creates a specified number of groups with a specified number of enrollments per group. Users choose the group they want to enroll in from the **Groups** page. In the Members column of the Groups table, capacity markers display in the form x/y, where x is the number of enrolled students and y is the capacity.
	Use this enrollment type when you know how many users you want in each group, you want to allow users to choose their own groups, and you want each group to have a maximum number of users. Select this option when you want users to choose their groups based on areas of interest or responsibility in larger projects, but you want to limit membership in each group to a certain number of users.
Single user, member-specific groups	Using this option creates a group with a single user where the first name and last name of the learner is the name of the group. When a new learner is enrolled in the course a group is automatically created for them.
	Select this option when you want to create journal type groups with a single member.
	Note: This enrollment type must be enabled by your administrator using configuration variables. If you are not able to use this option, contact your administrator.

What happens when you delete a group or group category?

When you delete a group, the following things happen:

- If you've selected the Auto-enroll new users option, users are automatically distributed in the remaining groups.
- If groups are set up for manual enrollment, you must add users to the remaining groups using the Enroll Users page.
- Group discussion forums remain available for reference. You can delete them in the Discussions tool.
- Group locker areas and the files they contain are deleted.
- group assignment submission folders and the files they contain are deleted.

When you delete a category, the following things happen:

- Users are no longer enrolled in groups because they do not exist.
- Group discussion forums remain available for reference. You can delete them in the Discussions tool.

- Group Locker areas and the files they contain are deleted.

- group assignment submission folders and the files they contain are deleted.

Set up self-enrollment in groups

Self-enrollment allows users to enroll in groups on their own. Use this option when you want users to choose their own group members or to be a part of a group on a topic that interests them.

Users can self-enroll in groups by clicking the **Choose Group** link beside the name of a group category set up for self-enrollment. A link displays at the top of the user's Groups page when self-enrollment is available.

If a group is full, the Members column displays the total number of group members in red with "(Full)" beside it. If a learner wants to leave a group that they self-enrolled in before the date specified by the Set Self Enrollment Expiry Date option (if selected), on the **My Groups** page, learners can click **Leave Group** if the option is configured.

Clicking the capacity marker or the total listed in the Members column opens the Group Members pop-up, which contains a list of current group members. You cannot click empty groups.

1. On the **Manage Groups** page, click **New Category.**

2. Enter a **Category Name** and **Description**.

3. Select one of the following options from the **Enrollment Type** drop-down list:

   - **Groups of # - Self Enrollment**

   - **# of Groups - Self Enrollment**

   - **# of Groups, Capacity of # - Self Enrollment**

4. Depending on the chosen Enrollment Type, enter the **Number of Groups** to create, the **Number of Users** per group, or both.

5. To associate discussion areas with the groups in the category, select **Set up discussion areas**.

6. To associate locker areas with the groups in the category, select **Set up lockers**.

7. To associate assignment submissions folders with the groups in the category, select **Set up assignment submissions folders**.

8. Click **Save**.

Restrict a forum or topic to specific groups or sections

Using topic or forum restrictions, you can create discussion areas where members of a group or section can collaborate on assignments or discuss course material in small teams. You can also use restrictions to create separate forums or topics for each group or section in a course offering.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the context menu of the forum or topic you want to restrict, click **Edit**.

3. In the **Restrictions** tab, select the **Restrict this <forum/topic> to the following groups and sections** check box.

4. Click **Add Groups and Sections**.

5. Select the groups or sections you want to add, then click **Add**.

6. To remove a specific group or section's access, click the ✖ **Remove** icon for the group or section.

To open the forum or topic to everyone again, clear the **Restrict this <forum/topic> to the following groups and sections** check box.

Enroll course leaders in groups

The way to enroll a course leader into groups depends on whether they have access to all groups or only select groups. Users should have access to all groups if they are responsible for mediating, grading, and working on material for the entire class. They should have access to select groups if they are only responsible for mediating, grading, or working on material for a particular group.

Add staff that are working with select groups the same way you add users. However, if an administrator enables the **Can be auto enrolled into groups** permission, users that lead courses and assist users (like teaching assistants) are added to groups at the same time as regular users; this could mean that all or most of your staff end up in the same group. Make sure you even out enrollment using the Enroll Users page.

1. On the **Manage Groups** page, click **Enroll Users** from the context menu of the category that contains the group (or groups) you want to enroll a user in.

2. Search for the user you want to add in the **Search For** field. To see a list of users that need to be enrolled, use the **Not Enrolled** search option.

3. To add users to groups, select the check boxes beside each user's name. Clear check boxes to remove users from groups.

4. Click **Save**.

Delete a user from a group

When you delete a user from a group, all of their files remain in the system, including discussion posts, Assignments submissions, and Locker files.

1. On the **Manage Groups** page, from the **View Categories** drop-down list, select the category containing the groups with users you want to delete.

2. From the context menu of the category, click 🪪 **Enroll Users**.

3. On the **Enroll Users** page, beside the user's name, clear the check box for each group you want to remove the user from.

4. Click **Save**.

Locations and Seating Chart

Locations and layout basics

What are locations and layouts?

Locations are used in Calendar events and seating charts. Use locations to inform your students where an event or class session is occurring.

Layouts are used in seating charts. You can configure a layout by toggling seats on or off to mimic your classroom environment.

Set a location as active or inactive

Locations are inactive by default. You cannot create a seating chart for an inactive location or associate an inactive location with Calendar events.

1. On the navbar, click **Locations**.

2. On the **Locations** page, select the check box beside the name of the location you want to make active or inactive.

3. Click **Set Active** or **Set Inactive**.

Reset a layout

If you have customized layouts for individual courses, you can revert a layout to the original layout set by the organization.

1. On the navbar, click **Locations**.

2. On the course level **Locations** page, click the layout that you want to reset.

3. From the **More Actions** button, click **Reset Layout**.

Add a location to calendar events

The Locations tool integrates with Calendar, enabling you to add locations to events you create in the calendar for a specific course or for the organization. Use this functionality to quickly and easily notify students where events are taking place. When a calendar event has an associated location, the location appears in the event information.

Locations must be active to add them to events. If you have the appropriate permissions, you can activate locations when you create events in the Calendar tool by clicking the **Manage Locations** link.

1. Access the **Calendar** tool.

2. Click **Create Event**.

3. Enter the details of the event.

4. In the **Location** section, do one of the following:

*   Select a location from the drop-down list. All active locations are available to associate with the event.

- Select the **Custom** option from the drop-down list. Enter the name of the location for your event in the adjacent field.

- If there are no active locations and a drop-down list is not available, enter the name of the location for your event in the field provided.

Seating chart basics

What is a seating chart?

Seating charts provide a visual representation of your classroom seating arrangement. You can activate and deactivate seats to mimic the physical layout of your class and assign students permanent spots in the chart.

Using the seating chart, you can view and track student performance, attendance, and participation for your course and group events on a session-by-session basis. You can also monitor response rates of students when they are called on in class unsolicited (also known as a cold call).

Seating Chart integrates with both the Locations and Calendar tools. Because seating charts are dependent on Locations, you must first create or activate a location with a layout before you can create any seating charts.

What is a seating chart cold call?

The cold call feature tracks the number of times you request a response or comment from a student in class who has not volunteered to participate.

When you mark a student who has been cold called during the session, the ⭐ Cold Call icon appears beside the student's name. This helps you track users you have called on in sessions.

Create a seating chart

Before you can create a seating chart for your course, you must have existing locations and associated layouts set up. If you are unable to add or edit locations and layouts, contact your administrator as you may not have the necessary permissions.

You can create seating charts for any group or section in your course.

1. On the navbar, click ▦ **Seating Chart**.

2. Click **Create a Chart**.

3. Enter your chart details.

Assign a seat to a learner

The options for assigning users to seats are only available when setting up the seating chart; after a session launches, these options lock. Any changes made to the seating chart after a session launches apply only to future sessions. All seat assignments and changes to seating charts save automatically.

1. On the navbar, click ▦ **Seating Chart**.

2. Click a seating chart.

3. Click a session for the seating chart.

4. To assign seating from the seating chart view, by do any of the following:

    - Drag-and-drop course participants one by one to assign or swap seats.

    - To randomly place all unassigned students on the seating chart at once, or to assign them specific locations in the chart (for example, bottom left), click ✚ **Assign All**.

    - To assign seats individually, from the context menu of each unassigned student, click ✚ **Assign User**.

5. To remove all students from the seating chart, from the **More Actions** button, select 👤 **Remove All**.

6. To randomize seat assignments, from the **More Actions** button, select 🔄 **Randomize**.

Sessions basics

What is a seating chart session?

When you add an event to a seating chart with a location, it is called a session. You can track attendance and participation for sessions and make student-specific comments.

Sessions are accessible from the Calendar tool and the Seating Chart tool.

You can set a positive threshold (the target participation score expected from students in a session) and a negative threshold (the minimum score students need to exceed to pass the session's participation requirements) for your sessions by clicking ⚙ Settings in the Seating Chart tool.

When you click a session, it starts automatically and remains in progress until you click ✅ Set Session Completed. This locks the attendance, participation tracking, and comments that you enter for the session.

The following are possible session statuses that can display beside seating charts:

Status	Description
Not Launched/No Session	Seating charts with sessions that have not been launched, or that do not have sessions attached to them, display no icons beside their seating chart name.
In Progress	Seating charts with sessions in progress have an ▭ In Progress icon beside the seating chart name.
Complete	Seating charts with complete sessions have a box (25) where the number indicates the participation score for the session and the color indicates what threshold value the session attained.

Seating Chart uses color coding when viewing a session to help distinguish student progress:

Color	Student progress
Green	Indicates students who are achieving or exceeding the positive threshold value.
Yellow	Indicates students who are below the positive threshold value, but are equal to or above the negative threshold value.
Red	Indicates students who are below the negative threshold value.

Create a session in seating chart

Before you begin: If the location you select does not have a seating chart associated with it, you can create one by clicking **Create a Chart**. After the seating chart is complete, click **Save** to close the window. The new seating chart should appear in the drop-down list. If you do not see it, click the ⟳ **Refresh Seating Chart List** icon.

To create a session, associate a seating chart with an event.

1. Access the Calendar tool for your course.

2. Click **Create Event**.

3. Enter details of the event.

4. Select a location. The drop-down list displays only active locations.

5. Select the seating chart you want to use for the location.

6. Click **Create**.

Track session attendance and participation

You can use sessions to track student attendance and participation during lectures. You can also add, edit, and delete user-specific comments during sessions. All changes save automatically inside sessions.

1. On the navbar, click ⊞ **Seating Chart**.

2. Click a seating chart.

3. Click a session for the seating chart.

4. Click the user you want to track from the session seating chart.

5. Do one of the following:

   - To mark a user present, click 🧑 **Present**.

   - To mark a user absent, from the **Absent** button, select 🧑 **Unexcused Absence** or 🧑 **Excused Absence**.

6. If you mark a user as present, adjust their Participation and Cold Call scores using the ➖ **Less** and ➕ **More** icons. You can award negative scores for participation, but not for cold calls.

7. To give personalized session feedback, click **Add Comment**.

8. Click anywhere outside the user's session summary to return to the session.

Announcements

Create an Announcements item

1. From the **Announcements** widget menu, click ➕ **New Announcements Item**.

2. Enter a headline and content for your Announcements item.

3. If you want to hide your headline's date and time, clear the **Always show start date** check box. By default, an Announcements item start date and time appears below the headline when displayed in the **Announcements** widget.

4. In the **Start Date** and **End Date** fields, select the posting availability date. Announcements items publish immediately, unless you specify an alternate start date from **Start Date**.
   Note: Post-dated Announcements items do not display in the **Announcements** widget even if users have permission to see future Announcements items. They can be found within the list of Announcements items on the **Announcements** page.

5. You can remove an Announcements item on a specific date by selecting the check box **Remove Announcements item based on end date**. You and administrators can still see the Announcements item after its end date, but it will not appear in the **Announcements** widget.

6. In the **Attachments** section, add attachments, audio recordings, and video recordings as part of your Announcements item.

7. To include additional release conditions, click **Attach Existing** or **Create and Attach**.

8. To continue editing the Announcements item, click **Save as Draft**. Students cannot see draft Announcements items. To release Announcements item to users, click **Publish**.

Delete an Announcements item

Do one of the following:

- From the context menu of the Announcements item you want to delete, click 🗑 **Delete**.

- To delete multiple postings, select the check boxes beside the Announcements item you want to delete. Click 🗑 **Delete** at the top of the list.

Edit an Announcements item

1. Click the **Announcements** widget.

2. On the **Announcements** page, click the Announcements item that you want to edit.

3. Edit your Announcements posting.

4. To inform users of major changes and updates to postings that they might have dismissed, ensuring that those headlines reappear with current information, select the **Major edit - send a notification and restore it for those who dismissed it** check box.
   You can also make the edited Announcements posting reappear at the top of the Announcements widget by changing the start date to the current date and time.

5. Click **Update**.

Reordering an Announcements item

1. Click the **Announcements** widget.

2. Do one of the following:

- On the **Announcements** page, from the **More Actions** button, click ⇅ **Reorder**.

- From the **Announcements** widget menu, click ⇅ **Reorder Announcements Items**.

3. Use the drop-down lists in the **Sort Order** column to select an item's order. Other items automatically reposition themselves according to the new order.

4. Click **Save**.

Restore a deleted Announcements item

1. Click the **Announcements** widget.

2. Click the context menu beside the Announcements widget, and select **Go to Announcements Tool**.

3. On the **Announcements** page, from the **More Actions** button, click **Restore**.

4. On the **Restore Announcements** page, select the check box of the Announcements item or items you want to restore.

5. Click **Restore**.

Sections

What is the difference between Sections and Groups?

When Sections exist for a course, users only see learning materials and users from their own section. If you want users to see all users and content for a course, but be a part of a group for a specific project or activity, use the Groups tool.

Considerations when setting up Sections

Scenario	Use
You know how many users you want in each section	**Sections of #** - Creates an unlimited number of sections with a maximum number of users in each section.
You offer a course that is always available	**Sections of #** - You can begin the course when enough users enroll to fill a section.
You don't know how many users are going to enroll in advance	**Sections of #** - Ensures each section is of a manageable size.
You know how many sections in total you will create	**# of Sections** - Creates a specified number of sections with an unlimited number of users in each section.
You know how many assistants you have to assist with grading and tutorials	**# of Sections** - Creates a specified number of sections.
You have specific classroom hours available to you	**# of Sections** - Creates a specified number of sections.
You are using a teaching model that divides users into sets of learning levels	**# of Sections** - Creates a specified number of sections.
You don't want to manually add new users to sections	**Auto-enroll new users** - Automatically adds new users to the section with the least users, or to a new section once the maximum size of all existing sections is met. If you choose the **Sections of #** option you might end up with a section that has only one or a few members in it. Click **Enroll Users** to manually change section enrollment and add users to full sections.
You don't want users to be added to sections based on alphabetical order	**Randomize users in sections** - Add users to sections based on a random order.

Create or add more Sections

If your course does not have any Sections yet, the Create Sections button appears on the Manage Sections page. Clicking the Create Sections button allows you to define section properties at the same time as you create them. If you are adding Sections to a course with existing Sections, the Add Section button appears on the Manage Sections page instead. The Add Section button allows you to quickly add more Sections with pre-defined properties. To edit the properties of existing Sections, click the **Edit Overall Section Properties** link.

1. On the navbar, click **Course Admin**.

2. In the **Learner Management** area, click ⛄ **Sections**.

3. On the **Manage Sections** page, click **Create Sections**.

4. From the drop-down list, select an **Enrollment Type**.

5. Enter information in the **Number of Sections** field or the **Number of Users** field depending on the Enrollment Type chosen.

6. To enroll new users automatically, select **Auto-enroll new users**.

7. To enroll users in sections randomly, select **Randomize users in sections**. If you don't select this check box, users enroll in sections alphabetically.

8. To create section-specific discussion topics inside a forum, select **Set up discussion areas**.

    If you select **Set up Discussion areas** when creating sections, you are automatically taken to the **Create Restricted Discussion Areas** page. On this page, you can create a separate topic for each section within an existing or new forum, complete with automatically configured restrictions for each section.

9. Click **Create**.

Edit properties of all existing Sections

1. On the navbar, click 🚪 **Course Admin**.

2. In the Learner Management area, click ⛄ **Sections**.

3. Click the **Edit Overall Section Properties** link.

4. Make your edits.

5. Click **Save.**

What happens when you delete Sections?

Deleting a section unenrolls users from the section, but not the classlist. You must manually add those users to remaining Sections.

Section-specific discussion topics remain available for reference if a section is deleted. Use the Discussions tool to delete unnecessary forums and topics.

Enroll students in Sections

The enrollment options you chose while creating Sections determine how users enroll into Sections. When you are enrolling users you can manually change which section users are enrolled in, search for users without a section enrollment, or manually enroll users into a section that has exceeded the enrollment limit.

1. On the **Manage Sections** page, click **Enroll Users**.

2. From the **Display** drop-down list, select a section.

3. To find a specific user or do a blank search to view all users, use the **Search For** field. To find users that still need a section, select the **Not Enrolled** check box.

4. Modify users' section assignments as needed.

5. Click **Save**.

About D2L

A global leader in EdTech, D2L is the creator of Brightspace, the world's first integrated learning platform.

The company partners with thought-leading organizations to improve learning through data-driven technology that helps deliver a personalized experience to every learner, regardless of geography or ability. D2L's open and extensible platform is used by more than 1,100 clients and almost 15 million individual learners in higher education, K–12, healthcare, government, and the enterprise sector—including Fortune 1000 companies.

The company has operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Brazil, and Singapore.
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