

# eCourseware Collaboration Tools

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## **Purpose**

This documentation highlights how to use the Discussions option in eCourseware.

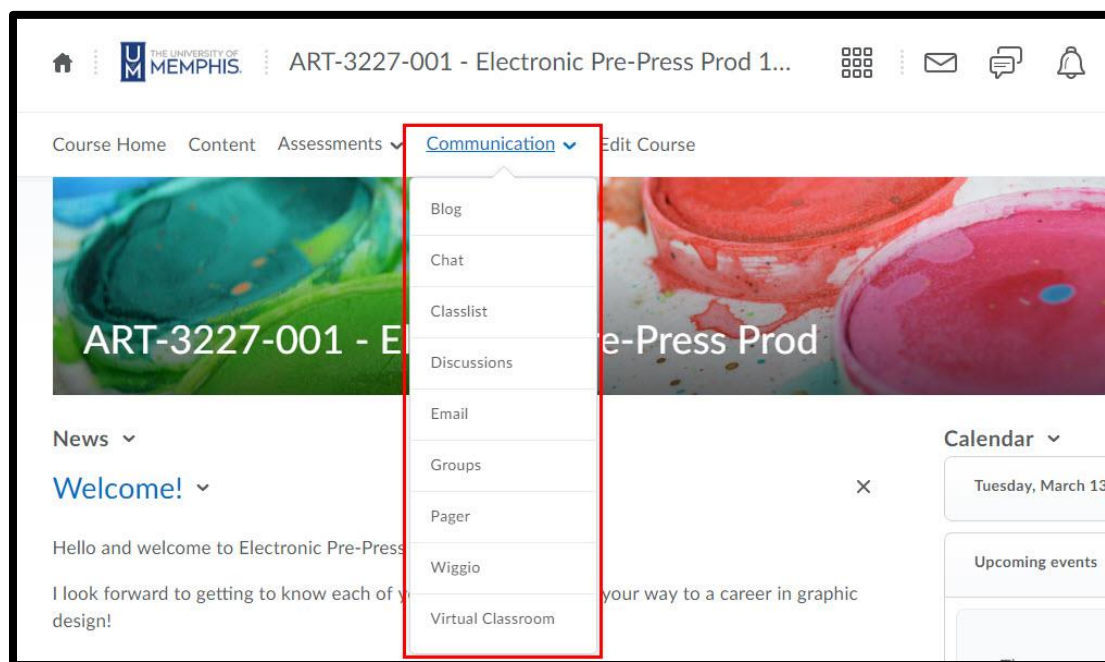
## **Audience**

The documentation is intended for University Faculty and Staff.

# Discussions

The eCourseware Discussions tool enables users the ability to collaboration in an area through post, read and reply to threads on different topics, share thoughts about course materials, ask questions, share files, or work with your peers on assignments and homework.

Click the Course navigation bar and select the **Discussion Tool** on the course from the drop down menu to access.

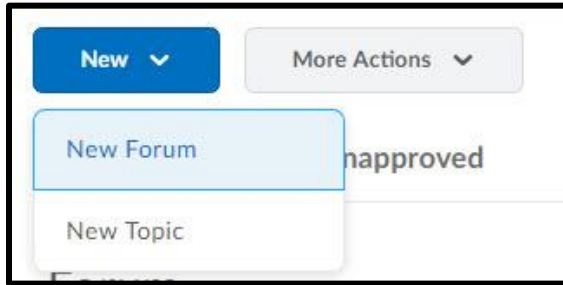


## Create a new forum

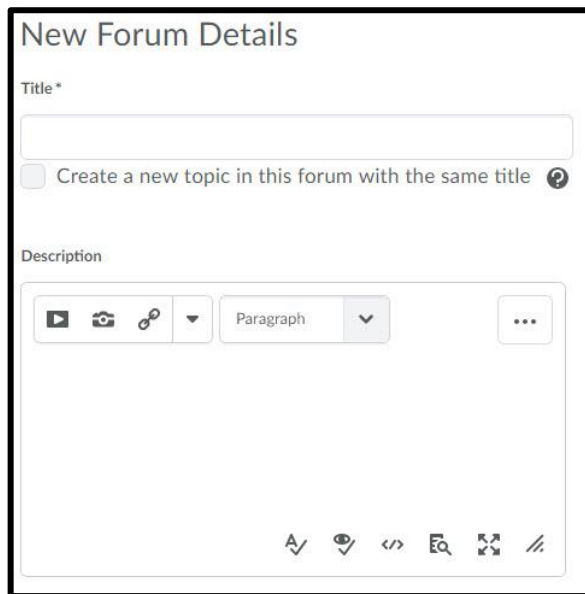
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Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the Discussions List page, click **New** then **New Forum**.



2. Enter a Title and Description for your forum.

A screenshot of a 'New Forum Details' form. The form has a title field labeled 'Title\*' and a description field labeled 'Description'. Below the title field is a checkbox labeled 'Create a new topic in this forum with the same title' with a question mark icon. The description field has a rich text editor interface with icons for video, image, link, and text, a 'Paragraph' dropdown menu, and a 'More' menu icon. At the bottom of the description field are icons for bold, italic, code, link, unlink, and list.


3. Select the **Create a new topic in this forum with the same title** check box to automatically create a topic in the forum with the same name.

4. In the Options section:

- Select the Allow anonymous posts check box to enable anonymous posting to topics in the forum.

**Note:** *You cannot evaluate anonymous posts.*

- Select the A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum check box to require moderators approve posts before they appear in forum topics.
- Select the Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic check box if you want users to start a thread before they can read and respond to other threads in each topic.
- Select the Display forum description in topics is you want users to be able to see the description with the topics.

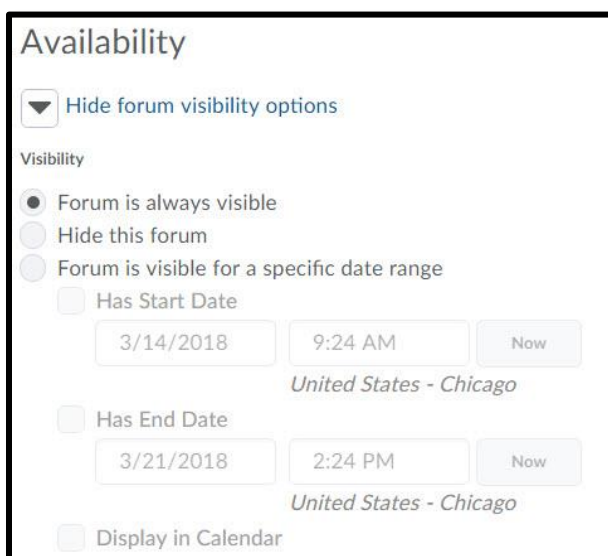


Options

- ☐ Allow anonymous posts ?
- ☐ A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum ?
- ☐ Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic ?
- ☐ Display forum description in topics ?

5. Select a Visibility option for your forum.

After clicking “Show forum visibility options” select from the options.



Availability

▼ Hide forum visibility options

Visibility

- ☒ Forum is always visible
- ☐ Hide this forum
- ☐ Forum is visible for a specific date range
  - ☐ Has Start Date
    - 3/14/2018 9:24 AM Now
  - ☐ Has End Date
    - 3/21/2018 2:24 PM Now

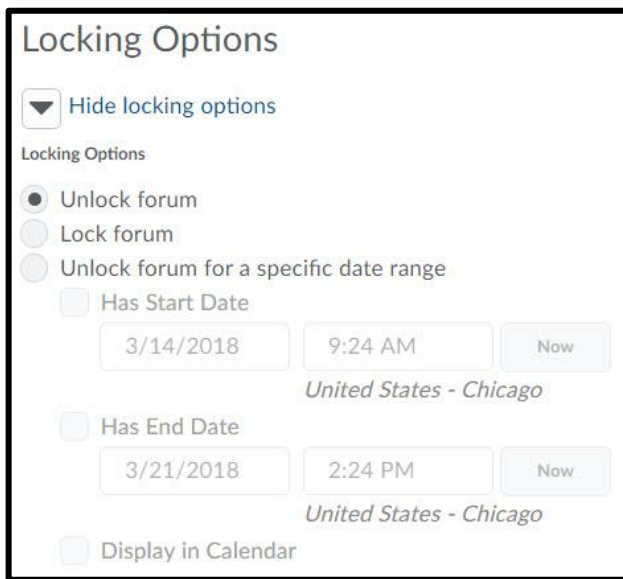
United States - Chicago

☐ Display in Calendar

*Note: If you select Forum is visible for a specific date range, select the Has Start Date and Has End Date check boxes to set your availability. You can also have dates Display in Calendar.*

6. Select forum Locking Options:

- Select Lock forum to the lock the forum upon creation. It remains locked until you select Unlock forum.
- Select Unlock forum for a specific date range to open the forum within a date range. Select the Has Start Date and Has End Date check boxes to set your forum availability.



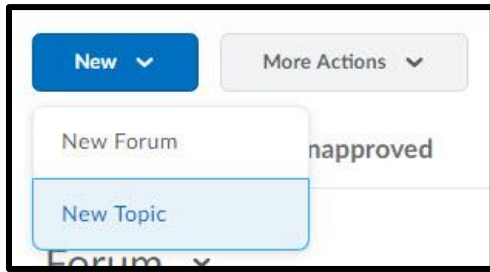
The screenshot shows a form titled "Locking Options". At the top, there is a dropdown menu with a downward arrow and the text "Hide locking options". Below this, the section "Locking Options" contains three radio button options: "Unlock forum" (which is selected), "Lock forum", and "Unlock forum for a specific date range". Under the "Unlock forum for a specific date range" option, there are two checkboxes: "Has Start Date" and "Has End Date", both of which are checked. For "Has Start Date", there are three input fields: a date field containing "3/14/2018", a time field containing "9:24 AM", and a "Now" button. Below these fields is a text field containing "United States - Chicago". Similarly, for "Has End Date", there are three input fields: a date field containing "3/21/2018", a time field containing "2:24 PM", and a "Now" button. Below these fields is another text field containing "United States - Chicago". At the bottom of the form, there is a checkbox labeled "Display in Calendar" which is currently unchecked.

7. Click **Save and Close** or **Save and Add Topic**.

## Create a new topic

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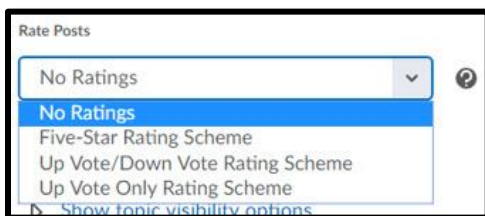
1. On the Discussions List page, click **New Topic** from the **New** button.



2. Select the Forum you want to place your topic in from the drop-down list. Click New Forum if you want to create a new forum for your topic.
3. Enter a Title and Description for your topic.
4. In the Options section:
  - Select the Allow anonymous posts check box to enable anonymous posting to the topic.

**Note:** You cannot evaluate anonymous posts.

- Select the A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum check box to require moderators approve posts before they appear in the topic.
  - Select the Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads check box if you want users to start a thread before they can read and respond to other threads in the topic.
5. Select a rating scheme from the Rating Scheme drop-down list:
    - No Ratings Hides all rating controls from users.
    - Five-Star Rating Scheme Allows users to assign each post a score out of five.
    - Up Vote/Down Vote Rating Scheme Allows users to push posts up or down in rank.
    - Up Vote Only Rating Scheme Allows users to push posts upwards in rank.



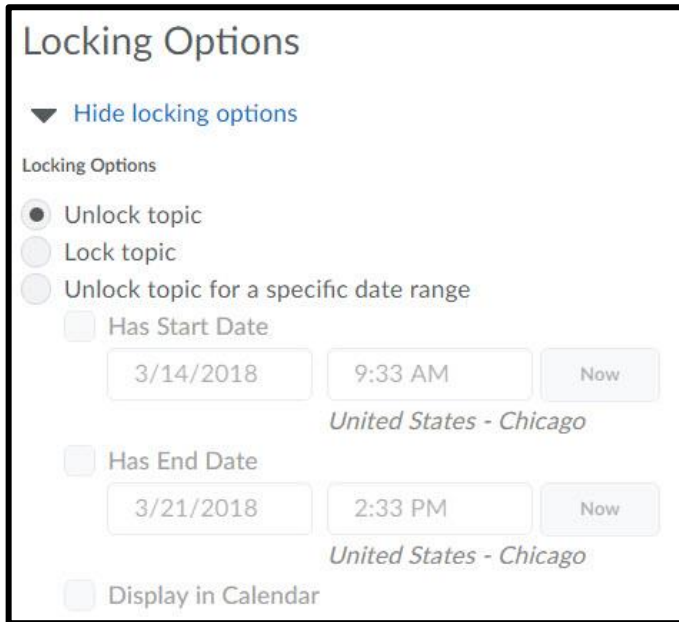


6. Select a Visibility option for your topic.

*Note: If you select Topic is visible for a specific date range, select the Has Start Date and Has End Date check boxes to set your availability. You can also have dates Display in Calendar.*

7. Select topic **Locking Options**:

- Select Lock topic to the lock the forum when it is created. It remains locked until you select Unlock topic.
- Select Unlock topic for a specific date range to open the topic within a date range. Select the Has Start Date and Has End Date check boxes to set your topic availability.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Locking Options". At the top, there is a link "Hide locking options" with a downward arrow. Below this, the section is labeled "Locking Options". There are three radio button options: "Unlock topic" (which is selected), "Lock topic", and "Unlock topic for a specific date range". Under the "Unlock topic for a specific date range" option, there are two checkboxes: "Has Start Date" and "Has End Date", both of which are checked. For "Has Start Date", there are three input fields: a date field containing "3/14/2018", a time field containing "9:33 AM", and a "Now" button. Below these fields is the text "United States - Chicago". For "Has End Date", there are three input fields: a date field containing "3/21/2018", a time field containing "2:33 PM", and a "Now" button. Below these fields is the text "United States - Chicago". At the bottom of the form, there is a checkbox labeled "Display in Calendar" which is not checked.

8. Click **Save and Close** or **Save and New**.

## Topic assessment

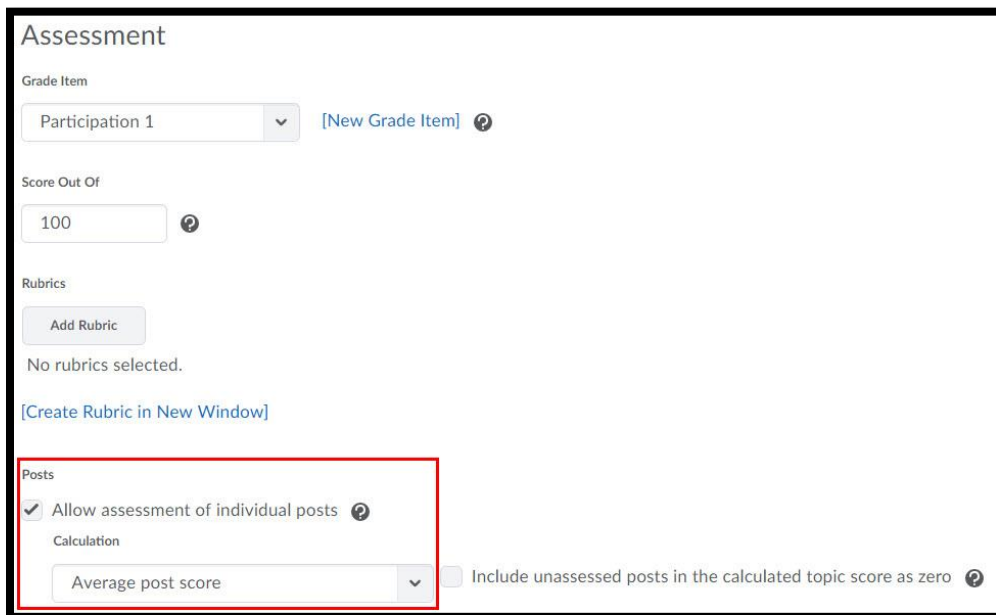
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You can evaluate users' individual posts and have eCourseware automatically calculate a topic score for each user, or you can assign a topic score directly to each user. If you choose to assess individual posts, you can specify how you want the system to calculate each user's overall topic score in the Posts section of the Assessment tab when you edit a topic.

## Calculation methods

There are five possible calculation methods that you can select when configuring a topic for assessment.

- **Average post score:** averages all of the post scores included per user.
- **Maximum post score:** identifies the highest score of all the post scores included per user.
- **Minimum post score:** identifies the lowest score of all the post scores included per user.
- **Mode post score - Highest on multiple:** 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:** 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.



The screenshot shows the 'Assessment' configuration page. The 'Posts' section is highlighted with a red box. It contains a checked checkbox for 'Allow assessment of individual posts' and a dropdown menu for 'Calculation' set to 'Average post score'. There is also an unchecked checkbox for 'Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero'.

Assessment

Grade Item

Participation 1 [New Grade Item] ?

Score Out Of

100 ?

Rubrics

Add Rubric

No rubrics selected.

[Create Rubric in New Window]

Posts

☒ Allow assessment of individual posts ?

Calculation

Average post score

☐ Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero ?

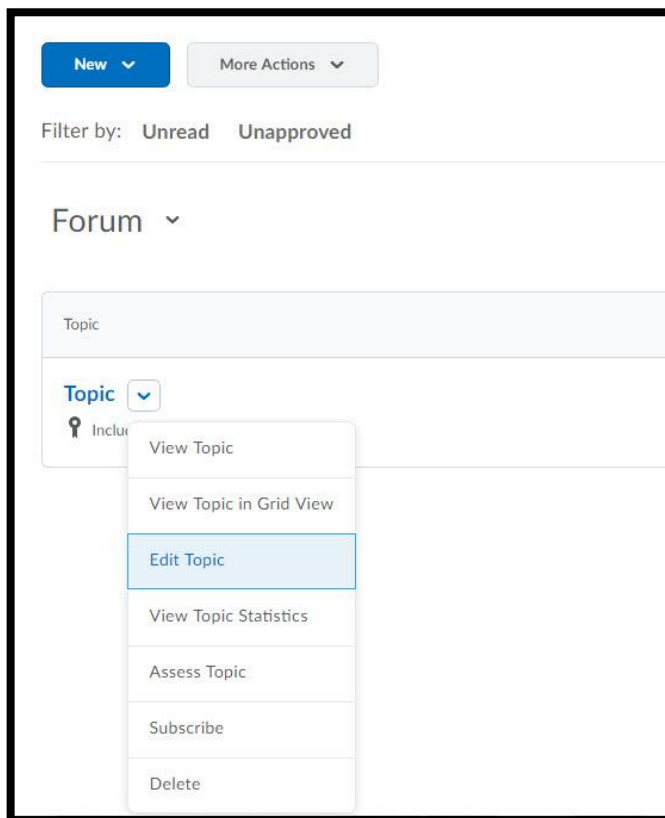
## Editing a Discussion Forum or Topic

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Editing a discussion forum gives you the ability to change the forum name, availability and locking options, release conditions, and group and section restrictions. Editing a discussion topic gives you the ability to reassign the topic to a different forum, rename the topic, and change the availability and locking options, restrictions, assessment options, and associated learning objectives.

### Edit a forum or topic

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



2. Make your changes.
3. Click **Save and Close**.

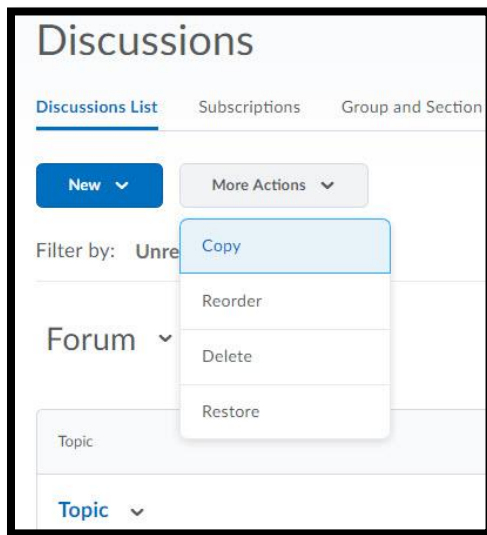
## Copying a Discussion Forum

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Copying a forum creates a new forum with the same properties as the original. You can copy the forum's topics and any pinned threads within those topics. Copying a forum does not copy any normal, unpinned threads inside the forum's topics; however you can copy or move individual threads from existing topics once you create the new topics.

### Copy a forum

1. On the Discussions List page, click **Copy** from the More Actions button.



2. Click **Copy a Forum**.



3. Select the forum you want to copy from the **Forum to Copy** drop-down list.
4. In the **New Forum Title** field, enter a name for the copied forum.

5. Select your Copy Options:

- **Copy topics:** Select this option to copy all of the topics inside the forum; this creates new topics with the same titles and properties as the existing ones.
- **Copy pinned threads:** If you choose to copy topics, select this option to copy any pinned threads within those topics. If you use pinned threads to post information about a topic (rules, evaluation criteria, etc.), you should copy these threads along with the topics.

6. Click **Copy**.

## Copying a Discussion Topic

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Copying a topic creates a new topic with the same properties as the original. Links to grade items or competency activities are not copied. You can choose to copy pinned threads along with the topic. Copying a topic does not copy any normal, unpinned threads inside the topic; however you can copy or move individual threads from inside the existing topic after you create the new topic.

### Copying a Topic

1. On the Discussions List page, click **Copy** from the More Actions button.
2. Click **Copy a Topic**.
3. Select the forum that contains the topic you want to copy from the **Forum to Copy** drop-down list.
4. Select the **Topic to Copy** from the drop-down list.
5. In the **New Topic Title** field, enter a name for the copied topic.
6. In the **Copy Destination** list, select the forum you want to copy the topic to. If you select multiple forums, each forum creates a copy of the topic.
7. Select the **Copy pinned threads** check box if you want to copy pinned threads into the new topic. Select this if you use pinned threads to provide information and instructions about the topic.
8. Click **Copy**.

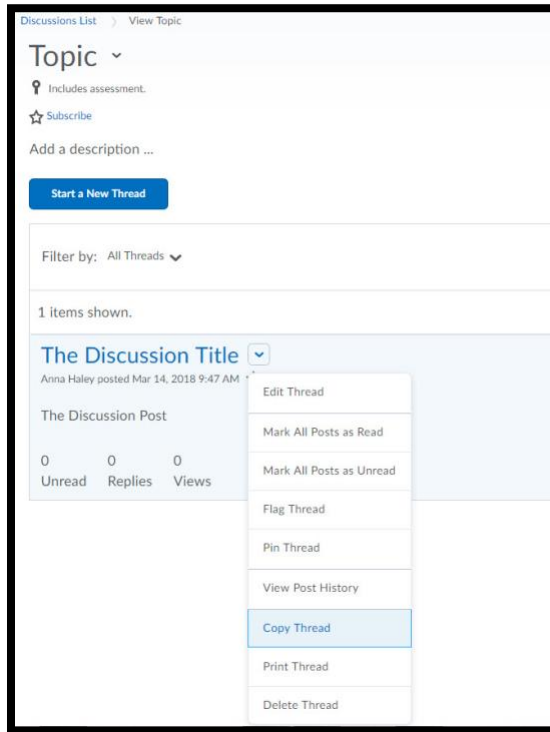
## Copying or moving a Discussion thread or post

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Discussion threads and posts can be moved to topics other than the original topic they are posted to. If you think a thread or post belongs in a different topic, you can move it by copying it and choosing the option to delete the original thread or post. If a thread or post is applicable to more than one topic, you can copy it into as many other topics as you want.

## Copy or move a thread

1. Click **Copy Thread** from the thread's context menu.



2. Select where you want to copy the thread to in the **Destination Forum** and **Destination Topic** drop-down lists.
3. Select the **Delete original post after copy completes** check box to delete the original post in the thread after the copy completes.

*Note: If you choose to delete the original thread post, it will still be visible in the original topic to users with the appropriate permissions.*

4. Click **Copy**.

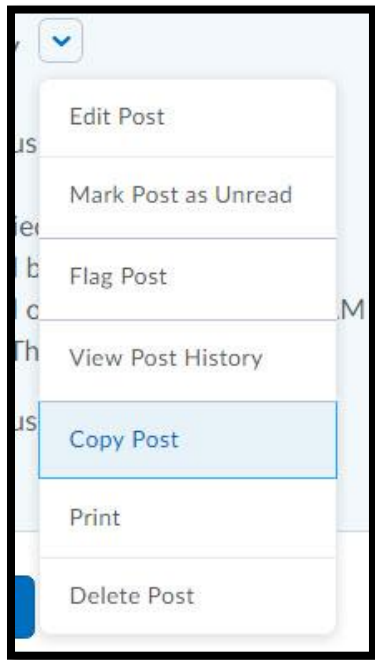
## Copy or move a post

1. Click **Copy Post** from the post's context menu.
2. Select where you want to copy the post to in the **Destination Forum** and **Destination Topic** drop-down lists.
3. Select the **Delete original post after copy completes** check box to delete the original post after the copy completes.

*Note: If you choose to delete the original post, it will still be visible in the original topic to users with the appropriate permissions.*



4. Click **Copy**.

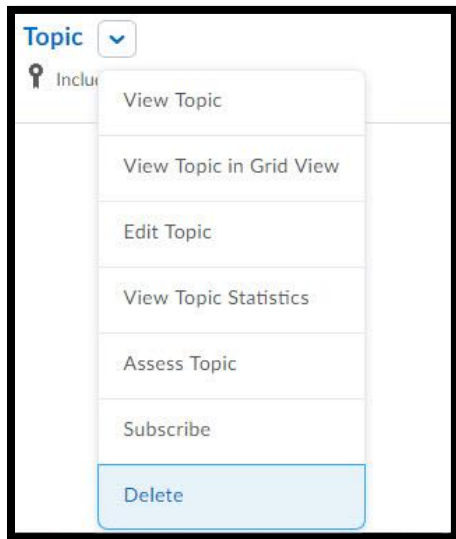


## Deleting Discussion Forums, Topics, Threads, and Post

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### Delete forums or topics

1. On the Discussions List page, click **Delete** from the context menu of the forum or topic you want to delete.



2. Click **Yes**.

### Delete a thread from a topic

Click **Delete Thread** from the context menu of the thread you want to delete.

### Delete a post from a thread

**Note:** When you delete a post, the system also deletes any replies to that post.

Click **Delete Post** from the context menu of the post you want to delete.

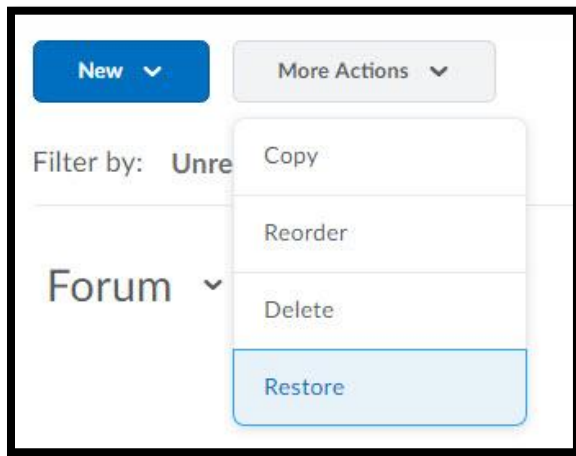
## Restoring a deleted discussion forum, topic, thread, or post

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You must have the **Delete and Restore Forums and Topics** permission enabled to restore deleted topics and forums.

### Restore a deleted forum or topic

1. On the Discussions List page, click **Restore** from the More Actions button.
2. Click **Restore** beside the forum or topic you want to restore.



3. Click **Yes**.

**Note:** If the forum you restore contains one or more topics, you will be given the option to also restore the forum's associated topics.

### Restoring a deleted discussion thread or post

To restore a deleted post, you must have permission **See Deleted Posts** enabled and you must have the **Display deleted posts** option enabled on the Settings page.

#### Restore a deleted thread

Click the **Restore Thread** link in the thread you want to restore.

#### Restore a deleted post

Click the **Restore Post** link in the post you want to restore.

**Note:** If the post you restore is a reply to another post, and the other post was also deleted, both posts restore.

# Locating Help Resources

Upon completing the training covered in this course, faculty, staff, and students are able to receive additional training help and resources. Such help can be located as follows:

## Service Desk Request

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### Submitting a Ticket

- Login URL:
  - [Here is a link to our service desk ticketing system](#)
  - After logging in, choose the link **Request Help or Services**.
  - Choose Request Help or Services.

### Call the ITS Service Desk (901.678.8888) any day of the week! (Excluding Some Holidays)

- The ITS Service Desk hours will be as follows:
  - Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm
  - Saturday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
  - Sunday 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- You can contact the Service Desk for assistance with technical login problems or issues. Incoming calls after hours will be handled by voicemail services. If you require assistance after 8:00 pm, please leave a message or submit a service request.
- Messages will be checked regularly and receive priority response the following business day. You may also email The Center for Teaching and Learning, [umtech@memphis.edu](mailto:umtech@memphis.edu) (using this email will automatically generate a help desk ticket).

## Important Links

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- [Explore the umTech Website](#)
- [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\) Website](#)
- [Search our Training and Documentation](#)