

Excerpt - Grading Only



Making the Most of **Discussions**

Blackboard Learn 9.1
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6: Grading Discussions

In a face-to-face classroom setting, students are expected to participate in class discussions and that participation is part of the equation when assessing performance. Assessing this participation can be ambiguous. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate a student who is active, but does not advance the discussion, from a student who speaks less frequently, but with greater impact.

Student interactions with the discussion board create a permanent record of participation. You need to have reasonable expectations about what you and your students can accomplish in an online discussion. Due to its asynchronous nature, more time may be needed for well-articulated points to emerge in the online environment. In addition to providing a practical number of course discussion opportunities, students need timely and constructive responses regarding the quality of their contributions. Evaluation not only lets them know how they performed, but shapes the improvement of future interactions.

You can assign discussion grades within a forum or thread and evaluate students on their participation, on the quality of their posts, or a combination of the two. You can create rubrics and use them while grading forums and threads. To learn about the rubrics tool, see the *Using Rubrics* manual.

You can also grade discussion posts from the **Needs Grading** page. To learn more, see the manual for this feature.

Learning Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the grading process.
- Grade discussion forums and threads.
- Disable grading.
- Change and delete grades.
- Use the email tool when assigning grades.
- Define discussion grading criteria.

The Grading Process

The discussion grading process consists of four steps.



Instructor activity



Student activity

1

CREATE

When you create a graded forum or thread, a column is created automatically in the Grade Center. The name of the forum or thread is used as the column title. You can edit the title in the Grade Center.

2

PARTICIPATE

Students participate in the discussion. As the discussion progresses, you can participate and provide feedback by replying to, rating, and moderating posts.

3

GRADE

Review student posts and type a numeric grade. You can lock threads after they are graded.

4

VIEW GRADES

The grades are saved in the discussion board and added to the Grade Center. Students can view their grades in **My Grades**.

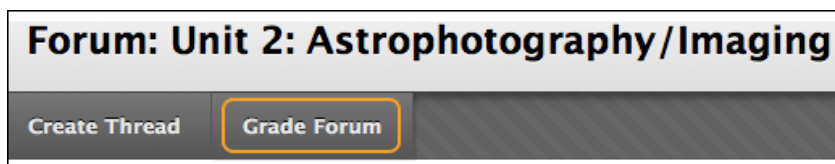
Assigning Forum Grades

You can assign discussion grades to evaluate participants on performance throughout a forum. When you create or edit a forum, you can enable forum grading options and a Grade Center column is created automatically.









Only users with a role of manager or grader can assign grades for posts. A grader cannot view his or her own work.

QUICK STEPS: Assigning Forum Grades

1. Access the discussion forum where you enabled forum grading and click **Grade Forum** on the action bar.





2. On the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page, click **Grade** in a user's row with a number in the **Posts** column.

Grade Discussion Forum Users					
 Email					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name 	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	 tbrown	3	-- 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	 ccasper	0	-- 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooper	Ashby	 acooper	2	-- 

3. On the **Grade Discussion Forum** page, a collection of the user's posts made to the graded forum appears. Because you can base a forum grade on multiple threads, all messages posted by the student are included for review. On the action bar, click **Print Preview** to open the page in a new window in printer-friendly format. Posts print in the order they appear on the page. To select which posts appear and in which order, you can filter and sort posts using the **Filter** function and the **Sort by** and **Order** drop-down lists.

The side panel contains three sections:

- **Forum Statistics:** Includes information about the user's posts, such as **Date of Last Post**, **Average Post Length**, and **Average Post Position**.
- **Forum Grade:** Includes **Grade**, **Feedback**, and **Grading Notes**.
- **Contributors:** Users who have submitted one or more posts appear with exclamation marks—the **Needs Grading** icon (). In this section, use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade -OR- click a user's name in the list. Click **Show All** to view all users in your course. Users who have not posted to the graded forum are included in this list. Click **Show with Posts Only** to return to the list of users who have posts to grade.

NOTE: The **In Progress** icon () appears next to a user's name until the specified number of posts is met for needs grading status. For example, if you choose three posts from the drop-down list and a user submits two, the **In Progress** icon appears.

4. In the content frame, evaluate the currently selected user's posts. To assign a grade, click **Edit Grade** in the **Forum Grade** section.

Grade Discussion Forum: Tony Brown

[Print Preview](#)[Filter](#)

Sort by [Date of Last Post](#) Order [▼ Descending](#)

Mark [▼](#)

Select: [All](#) [None](#)

Thread:

I got a few good shots

Post:

[I got a few good shots](#)

Author:

Tony Brown

Posted Date:

June 20, 2011 5:32 PM

Status:

Published

Well, I finally tried and got a few good shots of the moon and one good shot of Saturn.

I used a 4.5" zhummell eclipse telescope with a 20mm and 9mm lense and a SONY Cybershot digital camera just put up to the lense.

The best moon shot was with a wide angle (20mm) and a zoomed in (9mm). The only good shot of Saturn was with the 9mm.

[Reply](#)[Quote](#)[Mark as Read](#)

Thread:

Saturn

Post:

[RE: Saturn](#)

Author:

Tony Brown

Posted Date:

June 17, 2011 9:15 AM

Status:

Published

Hey, my uncle owns a photography place and he said when he does a prime focus, he just hooks the DSLR to the scope with a T-ring with EP projection. Then, hook the camera with a 3" extension with the EP inserted. He said, you'll understand!

[Reply](#)[Quote](#)[Mark as Read](#)

Thread:

help with equipment

Post:

[RE: help with equipment](#)

Author:

Tony Brown

Posted Date:

June 17, 2011 9:13 AM

Status:

Published

I don't think you can go wrong with that Nikon. I'd like to hear what others say about the rest.

Forum Statistics

Statistics for: Tony Brown

Total Posts: 3

Date of Last Post: Jun 20, 2011 5:32:22 PM

Average Post Length: 238

Minimum Post Length: 96

Maximum Post Length: 379

Average Post Position: 2

Forum Grade

[Edit Grade](#)

Grade for: Tony Brown

Grade: -- out of 10 [View Rubric](#)

Grade Date: --

Feedback: --

Grading Notes: --

Contributors

[Show All](#)

Ashby Cooper (2)

Henry Wagner (1)

Javier Perez (1)

Linda Herrera (3)

Mark Tsai (2)

Ryan Johnson (2)

Tony Brown (3)

NOTE: To collapse or expand a side panel section, click the arrow next to the section title.

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Making the Most of Discussions

5. Type a numeric value in the **Current Grade Value** box. Assigning a score here removes any Grade Center override that may exist for this user for this forum grade.
- NOTE:** If you associated a rubric with the forum, you can access and use it for grading.
6. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes** that appear to the forum manager or grader only. Optionally, use the spell check function at the bottom of each text box.
 7. Optionally, click **Text Editor** to access the editor in a pop-up window. Use the functions to format the text and include files, images, external links, multimedia, and mashups to your feedback or notes.
 8. Click **Save Grade**. The information appears in the **Forum Grade** section and in the Grade Center.
 9. Click **Edit Grade** to make changes. The changes appear in the **Forum Grade** section and in the Grade Center column. The changes are recorded in the Grade Center on the user's **Grade Details** page and on the **Grade History** tab.

Forum Grade

5 **Current Grade Value**
10 out of 10

Associated Rubrics:
Discussions
Used for Grading

Feedback:
6 Thank you for your easy to follow description and for helping others.

Grading Notes:
Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

7 Text Editor Cancel
8 Save Grade

Forum Grade





Edit Grade 9

Grade for: Tony Brown
Grade: 10 out of 10 View Rubric
Grade Date: 4/29/11 10:25 AM
Feedback:
Thank you for your easy to follow description and for helping others.
Grading Notes:
Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

10. When grading is complete, click **OK** to return to the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page or use the breadcrumbs to return to the discussion board.

Result

Grades appear in the **Grade** column on the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page and in the Grade Center.

Grade Discussion Forum Users					
	Email				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name ▲	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	 tbrown	3	10.00 Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	 ccasper	0	-- Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooper	Ashby	 acooper	2	-- Grade

Assigning Thread Grades

If you enabled **Grade Threads** during forum creation, you can assign grades for threads within that forum.

REMINDER: Students cannot create new threads in a forum where threads are graded.

QUICK STEPS: Assigning Thread Grades

1. Access the discussion forum containing the thread you want to grade.
2. On the thread listing page, in **List View**, click **Grade Thread** in the thread's row.
3. On the **Grade Discussion Thread Users** page, click **Grade** in a user's row with a number in the **Posts** column.

The screenshot displays two parts of the Blackboard interface. The top part is the 'Forum: Pluto Controversy' thread listing page. It features a 'List View' button (highlighted with an orange box) and a 'Tree View' button. Below the forum title, there are buttons for 'Create Thread', 'Search', and 'Display'. A table lists threads with columns: Date, Thread, Author, Status, Unread Posts, Total Posts, and Grade. The first thread is '6/15/11 2:30 PM Pluto Opinion' by 'Cathy Chu', published, with 7 unread posts and 7 total posts. A 'Grade Thread' button (highlighted with an orange box) is visible in the 'Grade' column.


The bottom part is the 'Grade Discussion Thread Users' page. It has an 'Email' button. Below it is a table with columns: Last Name, First Name, Username, Posts, and Grade. There are two users listed: 'Brown, Tony' (username 'tbrown', 1 post) and 'Casper, Chris' (username 'ccasper', 1 post). Both have a 'Grade' button (highlighted with an orange box) in the 'Grade' column.


Date	Thread	Author	Status	Unread Posts	Total Posts	Grade
6/15/11 2:30 PM	Pluto Opinion	Cathy Chu	Published	7	7	Grade Thread

Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade
Brown	Tony	tbrown	1	-- Grade
Casper	Chris	ccasper	1	-- Grade

4. On the **Grade Discussion Thread** page, a collection of the user's posts made to the graded thread appears. Because you can base a thread grade on multiple messages, all messages posted by the student are included for review. On the action bar, click **Print Preview** to open the page in a new window in printer-friendly format. Posts print in the order they appear on the page. To select which posts appear and in which order, you can filter and sort posts using the **Filter** function and the **Sort by** and **Order** drop-down lists.

The side panel contains three sections:

- **Thread Statistics:** Includes information about the user's posts, such as **Date of Last Post**, **Average Post Length**, and **Average Post Position**.
- **Thread Grade:** Includes **Grade**, **Grade Date**, **Feedback**, and **Grading Notes**.
- **Contributors:** Users who have submitted one or more posts appear with exclamation marks—the **Needs Grading** icon (). In this section, use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade -OR- click a user's name in the list. Click **Show All** to view all users in your course. Users who have not posted to the graded thread are included in this list. Click **Show with Posts Only** to return to the list of users who have posts to grade.

NOTE: The **In Progress** icon () appears next to a user's name until the specified number of posts is met for needs grading status. For example, if you choose two posts from the drop-down list and a user submits one, the **In Progress** icon appears.

5. In the content frame, evaluate the currently selected user's posts. To assign a grade, click **Edit Grade** in the **Thread Grade** section.

Grade Discussion Thread: Chris Casper

Print Preview **Filter**

Sort by **Date of Last Post** Order **Descending**

Mark **Select: All None**

Thread:	Pluto Opinion	Posted Date:	June 15, 2011 4:29 PM
Post:	I have to vote no	Status:	Published
Author:	Chris Casper		

Alas, Pluto, which is small and icy and orbits just beyond Neptune and has an eccentric orbit that is tipped out of the plane of the solar system, is none other than a Kuiper belt object—a leftover comet from the solar system's formation. If Pluto's orbit were ever altered so that it journeyed as close to the Sun as Earth, Pluto would grow a tail and look like a jumbo comet. No other planet can make this (possibly embarrassing) claim.

Source:
http://www.planetary.org/explore/topics/topten/tyson_pluto_is_not.html

Reply **Quote** **Mark as Read**

Mark **Select: All None**

Thread Statistics

Statistics for: Chris Casper

Total Posts: 1

Date of Last Post: Jun 15, 2011 4:29:50 PM

Average Post Length: 641

Minimum Post Length: 641

Maximum Post Length: 641

Average Post Position: 2

Thread Grade

Edit Grade

Grade for: Chris Casper

Grade: -- out of 10 **View Rubric**

Grade Date: --

Feedback: --

Grading Notes: --

Contributors

Show All

- Chris Casper (1)
- Henry Wagner (1)
- Javier Perez (1)
- Linda Herrera (1)
- Ryan Johnson (1)
- Tony Brown (1)

NOTE: To collapse or expand a side panel section, click the arrow next to the section title.

6. Type a numeric value in the **Current Grade Value** box. Assigning a score here removes any Grade Center override that may exist for this user for this thread grade.

NOTE: If you associated a rubric with the thread, you can access it while grading.

7. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes** that appear to the forum manager or grader only. Optionally, use the spell check function at the bottom of each text box.

8. Optionally, click **Text Editor** to access the editor in a pop-up window. Use the functions to format the text and include files, images, external links, multimedia, and mashups to your feedback or notes.
9. Click **Save Grade**. The information appears in the **Thread Grade** section and in the Grade Center.
10. Click **Edit Grade** to make changes. The changes appear in the **Thread Grade** section and in the Grade Center column. The changes are recorded in the Grade Center on the user's **Grade Details** page and on the **Grade History** tab.

Thread Grade

Current Grade Value
10 out of 10

Associated Rubrics:
Discussions
Used for Grading

Feedback:
Interesting article. New to me. Thanks for sharing.

Grading Notes:
Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

Text Editor Cancel Save Grade

Thread Grade

Edit Grade 10

Grade for: Chris Casper
Grade: 10 out of 10 View Rubric

Grade Date: 5/19/11 1:07 PM

Feedback:
Interesting article. New to me. Thanks for sharing.

Grading Notes:
Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

11. When grading is complete, click **OK** to return to the **Grade Discussion Thread Users** page or use the breadcrumbs to return to the discussion board.

Result

Grades appear in the **Grade** column on the **Grade Discussion Thread Users** page and in the Grade Center.

Grade Discussion Thread Users					
Email					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	tbrown	1	--
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	1	10.00

Disabling Grading

You can disable grading for graded forums and threads, even if grades exist.

QUICK STEPS: Disabling Grading

1. Access the discussion board and access a forum's contextual menu.
2. Select **Edit**.
3. On the **Edit Forum** page, in the **Forum Settings** section, change the grading option to **No Grading in Forum**.
4. Click **Submit**. If you assigned grades for the forum or its threads, a warning message appears indicating that changing the setting will delete all existing grades. This action is final.
5. Click **OK** to continue or click **Cancel** to preserve the Grade Center items.

Emailing Students When Assigning Grades

While assigning grades, you can use the email tool in the discussion board to quickly contact students. For example, send a student a question prior to assigning a grade or send feedback after assigning a grade.

QUICK STEPS: Emailing Students When Assigning Grades

1. Navigate to the forum or thread to assign a grade.
2. On the **Grade Discussion Thread Users** page or the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page, select one or multiple users' check boxes or select the check box in the header row to select all the users you want to email.
3. On the action bar, click **Email**.
4. On the **Email Forum User** page, you can edit the **Subject**.
5. Type a question or feedback in the **Message** box.
6. Click **Submit**.

Grade Discussion Thread Users

Email **3** << < Page **1** of 2 >

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Akbar	Mina	makbar	0	--	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	tbrown	0	--	Grade
2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	1	--	Grade

Email Forum User **6**

Cancel Submit

1 Email Information

To Chris Casper
From cchu@myschool.edu
Subject **4** Your ocean is....
Message **5**
Hi Chris,
Do you think you need to narrow your topic in any way? Let me know if I can help you.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course and access the discussion board.

Grade Discussions

- In the **Unit 2: Astrophotography/Imaging** forum, review and assign a grade for **Ryan Johnson's** postings.
- In the **Unit 3: Mass Objects** forum, assign a grade to **Ryan Johnson** for his posting to the **Discovery of Trans-Neptunian Object** thread.
- In the **Pluto Controversy** forum, select the **Pluto Opinion** thread and change the grade assigned to **Linda Herrera**. Send her an email explaining the grade change.

Best Practice: Define Grading Criteria

When grading discussions, you need to have reasonable expectations about what you and your students can accomplish. Due to the asynchronous nature of an online discussion, you may need more time for well-articulated points to emerge than in a face-to-face classroom.

Tell students specifically what is expected, both in terms of quantity and quality of postings, and consider sharing some exemplary postings.

When evaluating student postings, keep the following questions in mind:

Did student participation in the discussion meet the objectives you set?

- Did students participate regularly?
- Did students reply to postings?
- Did students post new threads?
- Did students use the rating feature?

Did the quality of the contributions meet the objectives you set?

- Were replies or postings on topic?
- Did they add value to the discussion?
- Did they introduce new ideas?
- How did peers rate their postings?

Consider compiling your grading criteria into a rubric. By using a rubric to grade discussions, you provide students with clear performance requirements and consistent grading criteria to graders. To learn more about the rubrics tool, see the *Using Rubrics* manual.