

## Grade 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. You may find that assessing this type of participation is ambiguous. How do you differentiate between 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, yet you also need to have reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished in an online discussion. Due to its 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. You can assign grades based on student participation, on the quality of their posts, or a combination of the two. You can create rubrics and refer to them while grading forums and threads, but you need to create and associate the rubrics in advance.

The following table details the four steps in the discussion grading process.

Activity	Description
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.
Participate	Students participate in the discussion. As the discussion progresses, you can participate and provide feedback by replying to, rating, and moderating posts.
Grade	You view students' posts and assign grades. You can lock threads after they are graded.
View Grade	The grades are saved in the discussion board and the Grade Center. Students can view their grades in <b>My Grades</b> .

## How to Enable Discussion Grading

When you create or edit a forum, you can enable grading options. When you enable grading, a Grade Center column is created automatically.

The grade settings appear on the **Create Forum** page and the **Edit Forum** page.

- Click **Grade Discussion Forum** and type a point value to evaluate participants on performance throughout a forum.
- Click **Grade Threads** to evaluate participants on performance in each thread.
- Optionally, select the check box for **Show participants in needs grading status** and select the number of posts required to show participants in needs grading status. Applying this setting will show the needs grading icon—the exclamation mark—in the Grade Center after each user makes the specified number of posts. Also, the posts are placed in the queue on the **Needs Grading** page.

**Note:** If you choose three posts from the drop-down list and a user submits two, the in progress icon appears in the Grade Center cell and the discussion board until the specified number of posts is met.

- If you select a grading option and do NOT select the check box, the needs grading icon does not appear in the Grade Center and posts do not appear on the **Needs Grading** page. In the Grade Center, users' attempts will appear with the in progress icon when they post.
- Optionally, associate a rubric by pointing to **Add Rubric**.

**Forum Settings**

Viewing Threads/Replies:  Standard View  
 Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.

Grade:  No Grading in Forum  
 **Grade Discussion Forum:** Points possible:   
 Grade Threads

Show participants in "needs grading" status after even  Posts

Due Date:

Associated Rubrics:

## Enable Thread Grading Before or After Thread Creation

If you chose to grade threads when you created a forum, you decide on a thread-by-thread basis whether to grade a thread.

**Note:** If you select the **Grade Threads** option, users cannot create new threads.

1. On the **Create Thread** page, select the **Grade Thread** check box and type the **Points possible**. You decide when posts go into needs grading status by selecting the check box for **Show participants in needs grading status** and selecting the number of posts from the drop-down list.
2. Click **Submit**.
3. In the forum, the **Grade Thread** function appears in the thread's **Grade** column.



You can also enable thread grading directly from the thread list in a forum.

1. Click the **Grade** function in a thread's **Grade** column.
2. Type the **Points possible**.
3. Click **Submit**. The **Grade Thread** function appears in a thread's **Grade** column.

## How to Grade Forum Participation

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. However, a grader cannot view his or her own work.

You can create rubrics and refer to them while grading forums, but you must create and associate the rubrics in advance.

1. Access the gradable discussion forum and click **Grade Discussion Forum** on the action bar.

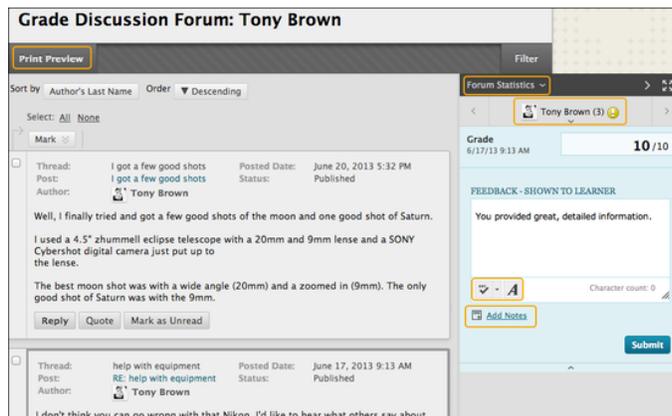


2. On the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page, click **Grade** in a user's row with a number in the **Posts** column.

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

3. On the **Grade Discussion Forum** page, a collection of the student's posts made to the graded forum appears. Because you can assign a forum grade based on multiple threads, all messages posted by a student are included for review. On the action bar, click **Print Preview** to open the page in a new

window in a 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 on the action bar.



The grading sidebar contains the following areas:

- **Forum Statistics:** Click to access the drop-down area that includes information about a user's posts, such as **Total Posts**, **Date of Last Post**, **Average Post Length**, and **Average Post Position**.
  - Click the down-pointing arrow next to the current user's name to view a list and select a user with posts ready to grade. The selected user's posts appear in the content frame. Use the left- and right-pointing arrows to navigate to the previous or next student.
  - Area to add grade, feedback, and private notes for yourself.
4. In the content frame, evaluate the currently selected user's posts. In the grading sidebar, type a grade. If you associated a rubric for this forum, expand and complete the rubric. To edit an existing grade, click in the **Grade** box and change the grade.
  5. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user. In the **Add Notes** section, make notes that appear only to you (forum manager) and the grader role. You can use the spell check function in the bottom of each text box. The icon for **Click to open full content editor** gives you access to all the content editor functions.
  6. Click **Submit** to add the grade, feedback, and grading notes to the Grade Center. The grade appears on the **Grade Discussion Forum Users** page.

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

# How to Access Threads for Grading

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

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

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

You can create rubrics and refer to them while grading threads, but you must create and associate the rubrics in advance.

After accessing the user's threads to grade, follow the steps outlined in the previous section for inline forum grading.

1. Access the discussion forum containing a 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 shows two parts of the forum interface. The top part is the 'Forum: Pluto Controversy' thread listing page. It has a 'List View' button highlighted in orange. Below the navigation bar is a table with columns: Date, Thread, Author, Status, Unread Posts, Total Posts, and Grade. A row is visible for a thread titled 'Pluto Opinion' by 'Cathy Chu', published, with 7 unread posts and 7 total posts. A 'Grade Thread' button is highlighted in orange in the Grade column.

The bottom part is the 'Grade Discussion Thread Users' page. It has an 'Email' button. Below the navigation bar is a table with columns: Last Name, First Name, Username, Posts, and Grade. Two rows are visible: one for 'Brown, Tony' with 1 post and a 'Grade' button highlighted in orange; and one for 'Casper, Chris' with 1 post and a 'Grade' button.

4. On the **Grade Discussion Thread** page, a collection of the student's posts made to the graded thread appears. Since you can assign a thread grade based on multiple messages, all messages posted by a student are included for review. On the action bar, click **Print Preview** to open the page in a new window in a 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 on the action bar.
5. Provide a grade, feedback, and grading notes. After clicking **Submit**, the information is added to the Grade Center. The grade appears on the **Grade Discussion Thread Users** page.

# How to Email Users While Grading Discussions

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

1. Access a forum or thread.
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, edit the **Subject**, if needed.
5. Type a question or feedback in the **Message** box.
6. Click **Submit**.

# How to Disable Discussion Grading

Even if grades exist, you can disable grading for graded forums and threads.

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

**Forum Settings**

Viewing  
Threads/Replies

Standard View  
 Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.

**Grade**

No Grading in Forum  
 Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible: 50  
 Grade Threads

# Group Discussion Grading

Unlike other graded group activities, when you set a group discussion board to graded, each member is graded independently of other group members. Each group member must make the designated number of posts to earn his or her own grade. You do not assign a group grade for contributions to the group discussion board.

## To Learn More

To learn about other grading workflows, see [Rubrics](#) and the [Needs Grading Page](#).

To learn more about giving feedback rating, and moderating posts, see [Reply to Discussion Posts](#) and [Moderate Discussions](#).

To learn more about forum roles, see [About Forum Roles](#).