

# Groups Discussions

If your unit uses groups to encourage students to collaborate on unit work, you can also include group tools to help them communicate. For example, you can provide each group with their own discussion board just for them, allowing them to create and manage their own sub-forums.

Note, group discussion boards are separate from the regular unit discussion board.

**Example:** You assign students to groups and provide each group with a problem or situation to explore and develop into a class presentation. The groups can use the chat tool and their group discussion boards to brainstorm and discuss topic choices. They can also use their group discussion boards to post web links and members can post replies on their value. Also, they can use the group discussion board to divide up tasks and refine the outline. Members post portions of the presentation and all members post replies regarding the usefulness, grammar, and flow, as well as for agreement on the final product.

## Enabling group discussion boards

By default, discussion boards are automatically created for groups, allowing students to collaborate and communicate.

However, you do have the ability to un-tick discussion boards when creating groups, under the **Tool Availability** heading.

TOOL AVAILABILITY

- Blogs
  - No marking
  - Grade: Points possible:
- Discussion Board
  - Allow any group members to create forums.
  - Do not allow student group members to create forums.

If you created a group or set of groups without a discussion board, but wish to change your mind, you can. Simply go to the **Control Panel, Users and Groups**, click **Groups**, edit the **group** or **group set**, re-tick the tool and click **submit**.

## Disabling an existing group discussion boards

You can't delete an existing groups discussion board without deleting the group, but you can instead make the discussion board unavailable. Existing posts are not removed—just made unavailable to group members.

You can do this by going to the **Control Panel, Users and Groups**, click **Groups**, edit the **group** or **group set**, un-ticking the tool and by clicking **submit**.

*When you make a graded group discussion board unavailable, the grade column associated with that group discussion board will remain in the Grade Center.*

Note - when members access their group homepage or the My Groups section, the link to the group discussion board no longer appears. You can make the tool available again at any time.

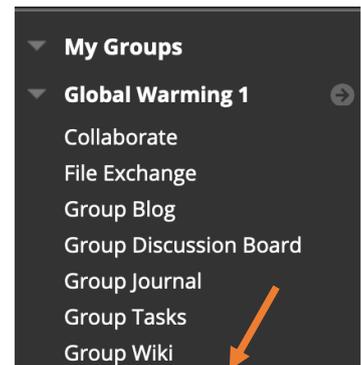
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## How to access a group discussion board

An instructor can access, view and contribute to a Groups Discussion board by:

- 1) Expand the **Control Panel** in the bottom left beneath the **Course Management** heading
- 2) Expand **Users and Groups** and click **Groups**
- 3) Click on a **Groups Name** to view it's available tools
- 4) Click on **Group Discussion Board** to view and contribute to forums, threads and replies

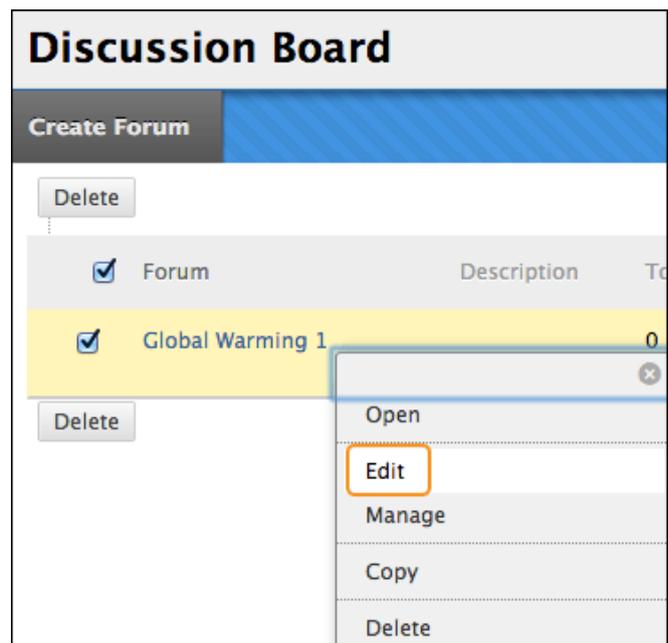
**FOR STUDENTS:** Students will automatically have a “My Groups” area in the left hand menu, and can access their Group Discussion Board here.



## Edit group discussion settings

By default, each new group discussion board uses the group's name as the title. You and all assigned group members can edit the forum name and provide a description.

*If you want to grade participation in a group discussion board, you can edit a forum's settings and enable grading in the forum or threads. 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 don't assign a group grade for contributions to the group discussion board.*



1. On your unit's Control Panel, expand the Unit Tools section and select Discussion Board.
2. On the Discussion Board page, the unit discussion board and all group discussion boards appear. Select a group discussion board.
3. On the next Discussion Board page, select Edit in the forum's menu.
4. On the Edit Forum page, you can edit all settings, including the name and description, which appears in the Description column on the group discussion board page. You can edit the forum availability and enable grading for the forum or threads.

You or any group member can create more forums in a group discussion board.