Brightspace Learning Environment
10.6+

Collaboration and Communication - Instructor Guide
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Document Change History

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Summary of Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1, 2017</td>
<td>• Added the topic <em>Flag a learner in a classlist</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| May 4, 2017   | • Renamed the *Post messages and attach course materials* topic to *Post messages and add attachments*, and added new attachment functionality.  
• Added the topic *Post to a group discussion topic*. |
| April 6, 2017 | • Added the topic *View a discussion topic*.  
• Added *Activity Feed* topics. |
| March 2, 2017 | • Minor formatting changes. |
| February 2, 2017 | • Updated the topic *Create a discussion forum topic* by changing the layout of the content. |
| January 5, 2017 | • Updated Brightspace Valence naming to Brightspace APIs.  
• Updated topic *Create a discussion topic* with steps on the new topic workflow.  
• Updated the *Create a group category* topic with additional steps. |
| November 3, 2016 | • Updated formatting for consistency.  
• Updated *Check user progress*, *What is an auditor?*, and *Configure a topic for assessment* topics to reflect tool name change from User Progress to Class Progress. |

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

About Activity Feed

Activity Feed is a course homepage widget that provides a central location for instructors (teachers) to post messages and links to course materials and external resources. It gives learners (students) the ability to quickly access links to important materials, and comment on messages made by instructors and classmates. For more information on using Activity Feed, read the D2L Activity Feed blog post (https://www.d2l.com/blog/use-activity-feed-improve-classroom-engagement/).

Figure 1: Activity Feed in Brightspace Learning Environment
Add Activity Feed to a course homepage

If the Activity Feed widget is not on your organization’s default course homepage, it can be added manually to a custom homepage.

1. From a course’s navbar, click Course Admin, and then Homepages.
2. Edit an available homepage, copy an existing homepage to edit, or create a new homepage.
3. In the Widgets section, from a large panel, click Add Widgets.
4. Locate the Activity Feed widget, and click Add.
5. To access the properties for Activity Feed, click on the Activity Feed widget.
6. To hide the widget title and prevent users from expanding and collapsing the widget, deselect the Display Titlebar option and select the Prohibit minimizing widget option.
7. Click Save and Close.
8. Use the Active Homepage drop down menu to select the updated homepage, and click Apply.

Note: D2L recommends using the basic homepage layout and adding the Activity Feed widget to the large panel. Ensure the large panel does not include other widgets. Widgets placed below the Activity Feed can become lost as the feed grows. If you are not able to locate the Activity Feed widget from the Add Widgets pop-up, contact your administrator to request its availability.

Post messages and add attachments

1. Navigate to a course homepage with the Activity Feed widget available.
2. Click anywhere in the Create a post text box.
3. Enter a message.
4. Optionally, do one or more of the following:
   - To attach a link to course materials, click the folder icon.
   - To attach a web link, click the web link icon.
   - To attach a link to a Google Drive file from your Google account, click the Google Drive icon.
     Note: Before attaching the link, ensure that the file has proper visibility permissions in Google Drive.
5. Click Post.

Comment on Activity Feed posts

1. Navigate to a course homepage with Activity Feed available.
2. Below the post you are responding to, click anywhere in the Write a comment text box.
3. Enter a message and click Post.

Edit and remove Activity Feed posts and comments

Instructors (teachers) can remove posts and comments made to the Activity Feed by any user. Instructors can also edit their own posts and comments if they require updates.

- Select the post you want to remove, and click Remove Post.
- Select the post or comment you want to edit, and click Edit Post.
- Select the comment you want to remove, and click Remove Comment.
- Select the comment you want to edit, and click Edit Comment.

Note: Learners (students) are limited to commenting on posts made by instructors. They cannot post original messages of their own. Instructors can only edit their own comments; they cannot modify comments made by other users.

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 Remove Announcements item based on end date check box. You and administrators can still see the Announcements item after its end date, but it does 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**.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Show a link to your user profile from your blog</td>
<td>Allow users who are viewing your blog to also view your profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make entries public by default</td>
<td>Selects the Make Public option for new blog entries so they are automatically shared with other users by default.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow comments by default</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive email when comments are added</td>
<td>Select this option to receive an email notification when a new comment is made on one of your blog entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow blog to be read by anyone</td>
<td>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 you cannot access private blog entries by URL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish your blog as an RSS feed</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write a blog 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 you can only access general chats from within 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.
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.
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 Class Progress tool may differ depending on whether you access the Class 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 Class 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 Classlist.
2. On the Classlist tool page, from the context menu of the user you want to add auditors to, click 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.
5. To delete an auditor, select the check box beside the user and click Delete.
   To select users you want to add auditees to, on the Manage Auditors page, click the Users {user} audits tab.
6. Click Add.

Flag a learner in a classlist

1. On the navbar, click Classlist.
2. In the Image column, click the flag icon next to the image of the learner you want to flag.
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 Discussions.
3. Enter a title for your new forum.
4. Enter a description for your new forum.
5. In the Options section, 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. In the Availability section, 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
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.

If the updated group discussions interface has been turned on by your administrator:

1. On the navbar, click Discussions.
3. From the drop-down list, select the forum you want to put your topic in. If you want to create a new forum for your topic, click New Forum.

4. To grant everyone access to the topic and restrict learners to only see threads from their own group or section, under Topic Type, select Group or section topic.
   Note: You cannot edit the topic type once you save the topic.

5. Enter your New Topic Details.

6. Select Availability options for your topic.

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

8. Click Save and Close.

If you are using the default group discussions interface:

1. On the navbar, click Discussions.


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.

8. 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 does not appear until a moderator approves it.

**View a discussion topic**

If you are viewing a topic from the Discussions tool:

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, click on the name of the discussion topic. The properties of the discussion topic related to availability, locking information, and any other details set by an instructor, are listed directly below the name of the discussion topic.
3. From the **Filter by** drop-down list, select an option, by which you can sort the individual discussion posts.

If you are viewing a topic from the Content tool:

1. On the navbar, click **Content**.
2. Click on a module.
3. Click on the name of a discussion topic.
   
   **Note:** You cannot view the properties of the discussion topic when you view the topic using the Content tool.
4. From the **Filter by** drop-down list, select an option, by which you can sort the individual discussion posts.

**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**.
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**.

**Post to a group discussion topic**

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions**.
2. On the **Discussions List** page, select a group discussion topic.
3. Click **Start a New Thread**.
4. From the **Post Thread to** drop-down list, select **All Groups**, or a specific group.
5. Provide a subject and enter your post in the HTML editor.
6. Set any of the following options:
   - 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 **Add attachments**, click **Upload**, and locate the file you want to attach.
   - To attach an audio recording, in the **Attachments** area, click **Record Audio > Record**. To adjust 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 add your post to other topics, click **Post to other topics**, and then **Add Topics**. Select the desired topics and click **Add Topics**.

7. Click **Post**.

**Note:** If you select the option to post to all groups, the Discussions tool creates a copy of the thread for each group to access and reply to.

**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 ★ **Unsubscribed**.
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. On the course home page, click Discussions. Make sure that there are topics nested under the discussion forum. 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 of the Availability section. If you selected Hide this [topic or forum], then learners are not able to see it. If a discussion forum has this setting enabled, all of the topics nested under it are also 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 of 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 of 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 HView <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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation method</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average post score</td>
<td>This calculation method averages all of the post scores included per user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum post score</td>
<td>This calculation method identifies the highest score of all the post scores included per user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum post score</td>
<td>This calculation method identifies the lowest score of all the post scores included per user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode post score - Highest on multiple</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode post score - Lowest on multiple</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of post scores</td>
<td>This calculation method sums up all the scores on posts within a topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 of 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 **Class 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.

4. 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. To return the Topic Score to the calculated score from the rubric, click Clear Override.
   - In the General Feedback field, enter feedback comments.
   - 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.

5. 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  green checkmark  icon beside the topic name on the Discussions List page. If you select the A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic setting, 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  Discussions.

2. From the context menu of the topic you want to assess, click  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 for 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.
   - In the **General Feedback** field, enter any comments that you have.

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.

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**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 nav bar, 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**.

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**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 nav bar, 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. Do either of the following:
   - To attach an existing rubric, click the Select Rubric button.
   - To create a new rubric for the topic, click the Create Rubric in New Window link.
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 scores 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.
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 APIs 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.

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 adds 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 are then created with the customized group names right away, and you do 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.

16. On the Create Restricted Topics page, select the Forum in which you want to create restricted topics.

17. If you have the new group topic creation feature enabled, do one of the following:

   1. If you want instructors to manage each topic individually, select the Create one topic per group radio button. Learners can only see topics assigned to their group.

   2. If you want to enable instructors to manage all activity and assessment from one topic, select the Create one topic with threads separated by group radio button. Learners can only see threads from their own group.

18. Click Create and Next.

19. Enter a group discussion Title and Description.

20. Click Create and Next.
21. Click **Done**.

**Create a group**

1. On the nav bar, 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Type Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Groups – No Auto Enrollments</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># of Groups</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groups of # – Self Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># of Groups – Self Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 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.

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. In the **Search For** field, search for the user you want to add. 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 learners permanent spots in the chart.

Using the seating chart, you can view and track learner performance, attendance, and participation for your course and group events on a session-by-session basis. You can also monitor response rates of learners 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 learner in class who has not volunteered to participate.

When you mark a learner who has been cold called during the session, the ✨ Cold Call icon appears beside the learner'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 learners 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 learner, click **Assign User**.
5. To remove all learners 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 learner-specific comments.

You can access sessions from the Calendar tool and the Seating Chart tool.

You can set a positive threshold (the target participation score expected from learners in a session) and a negative threshold (the minimum score learners 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Launched/No Session</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td>Seating charts with sessions in progress have an In Progress icon beside the seating chart name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Seating charts with complete sessions have a box ( ) where the number indicates the participation score for the session and the color indicates what threshold value the session attained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Learner progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Indicates learners who are achieving or exceeding the positive threshold value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Indicates learners who are below the positive threshold value, but are equal to or above the negative threshold value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Indicates learners who are below the negative threshold value.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Create a session in seating chart

Before you begin: If the location you select does not have a seating chart associated with it, to create one, click 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 learner 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.
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

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

## 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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