

Student Guide
Understanding the Discussion Forums



Understanding the Discussion Forums

This tool is useful for all students, and especially for distance-learning student as it helps you to keep in contact with your peers and tutors and you will use of for many of the activities throughout your course, and you will be using it a great deal. This short document will guide you through;

1. What is a discussion forum?
2. Why do I need to use the discussion forum?
3. Where do I find the discussion forum?
4. How to I use the discussion forum?

1 *What is a discussion forum?*

A discussion forum, also be called a message board, or internet forum is a tool used for communication, it is an internet based where 'talking' via text occurs asynchronously (where communication happens at different times). There are many of these on the internet now on as many subjects as you can think off (try looking in Google Groups). Within Moodle VLE it is as a tool and space where you can 'talk' (type) to your tutors and peers.

2 *Why do I need to use the discussion forum?*

As a distance-learning student, you will use the discussion forums a great deal, as it is the easiest and most convenient way to keep in contact with your peers and tutors. Examples of topic discussion can be;

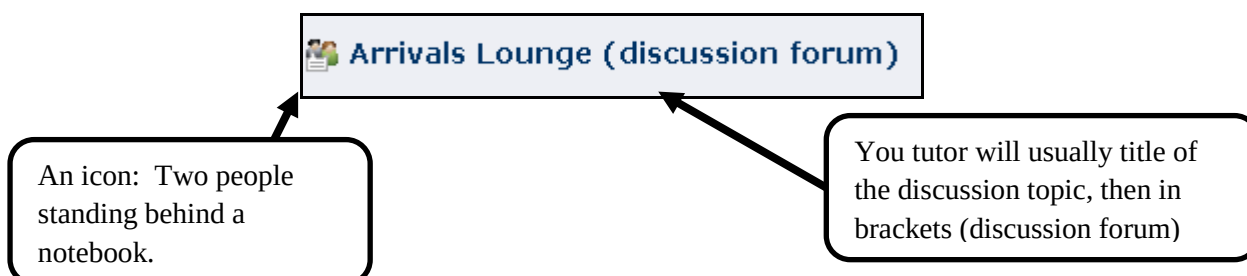
- Your thoughts and understanding on your subject theories, concepts and ideas
- Questions about your assignments or other aspect of your course
- Café space, for off topic conversation

You will find over time you will use the discussion forum these and many other topics. You will get to know your peers quite well through your conversations and they will help you to feel less isolated as you can discuss your achievements and concerns with others.

In addition to your subject and module discussion, there are a number of forums open to all Trinity Saint David on the home page of Moodle. There is one specifically for distance learning students and you are welcome to join you the wider conversation in this.

3 *Where do I find a discussion forum?*

You will see the discussion forums on your Moodle site (see the example below)



4 *How to I use the discussion forum?*

Click on the discussion (example above) from your module page or the Home page. This takes you to another screen:

Discussion forum page

The screenshot shows a discussion forum interface. At the top, a light blue banner contains the text: "Welcome! This forum is an area for the postgraduate community." Below this, smaller text states: "You can use this forum for social chat, general comments about your studies and to get to know each other. Please be aware that your lecturers and other staff may not necessarily read and respond to things you write here, it is very much a student driven area." Below the banner is a button labeled "Add a new discussion topic". Below the button is a table of discussions. The table has four columns: "Discussion", "Started by", "Replies", and "Date". The first row shows a discussion titled "MA World Religions" started by Ian James Cranston with 0 replies, dated Wed, 29 Jun. The second row shows a discussion titled "Careers and Employability Support available to distance and on campus students" started by Jane Bellis with 1 reply, dated Wed, 22 Jun. The third row shows a discussion titled "Benedict XVI: friend or foe? What do you think?" started by Ian James Cranston with 1 reply, dated Mon, 8 Jun. Annotations with arrows point to various parts of the interface: "Instructions & requirements on the discussion" points to the banner; "Topics already under discussion" points to the first row of the table; "Name of person who started the discussion" points to the "Started by" column; "Number of replies" points to the "Replies" column; and "Discussion start date" points to the "Date" column.

Instructions & requirements on the discussion

Welcome! This forum is an area for the postgraduate community.

You can use this forum for social chat, general comments about your studies and to get to know each other. Please be aware that your lecturers and other staff may not necessarily read and respond to things you write here, it is very much a student driven area.

Add a new discussion topic

Discussion	Started by	Replies	Date
MA World Religions	Ian James Cranston	0	Wed, 29 Jun
Careers and Employability Support available to distance and on campus students	Jane Bellis	1	Wed, 22 Jun
Benedict XVI: friend or foe? What do you think?	Ian James Cranston	1	Mon, 8 Jun

Topics already under discussion

Name of person who started the discussion

Number of replies

Discussion start date

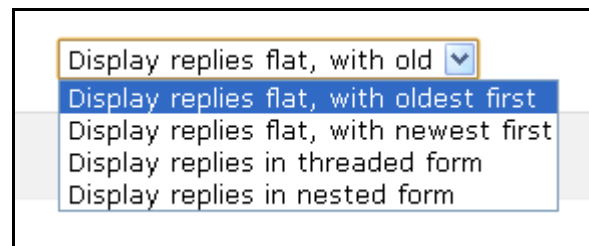
There can be a lot of different topics under discussion dependent on how the system is set up.

You have three options; you can;

1. Read the conversations without comment
2. Reply to a conversation already started, or
3. Start a new discussion topic or conversation.

5 Reading the conversation

Click on the conversation you wish to read, this will take you to the conversation page. You can view this page in a four ways (see below)



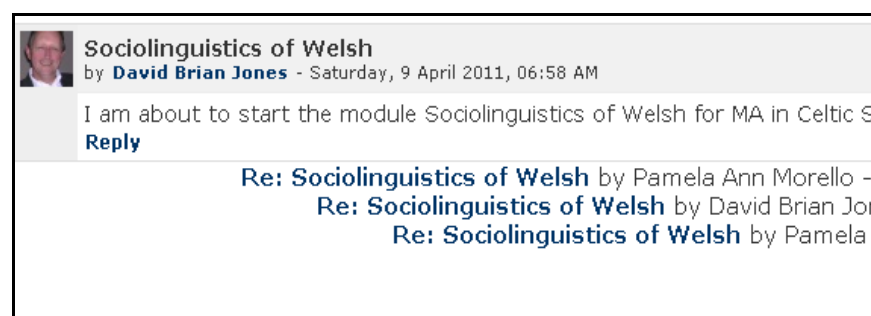
Display replies flat, with oldest post or newest first

This allows you to see the whole discussion in whichever date order you wish



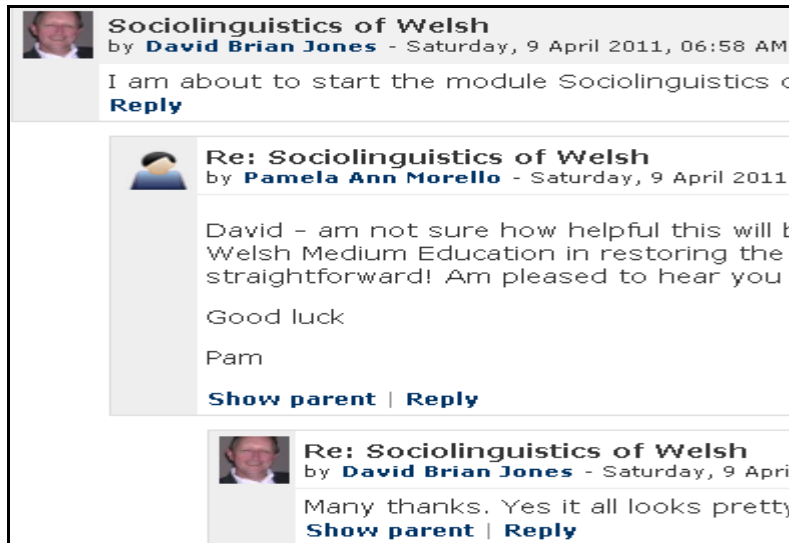
Display replies in threaded form:

You are able to read the first post then the details but not content of the conversation



Display replies in nested form:

Displays the conversation indented



2 Replying to a conversation

1. Click on the conversation you wish to reply to, taking you to the conversation page
2. At the bottom of the conversation you have the option to **Reply** - click on this, this takes you to screen where you can edit:
3. Remember Moodle works in Firefox and Explore and not in Chrome and Opera

You will see the conversation (in threaded form) and a box to add your message with the usual Word editing icons.

4. To continue the conversation simply **type into the message box**



5. Once you have added your comment you have the option to add an attachment (the same as adding an email attachment) then
6. Click on **Post to forum**

7. The **Subscription** field as it states allows you to subscribe to the conversation thread (useful if you are interested in the topic, or work with others within a group)

Path:



Format  HTML format

Subscription  Send me email copies of posts to this forum 

Attachment (Max size: 2MB) 

There are required fields

3 Starting a conversation

Below the discussion forum instructions you will see a link **Add a new discussion topic**

Welcome to The Coffee Shop...



An open forum for everyone to discuss anything, fom coffee to Kofi Annan....

- 1 Click on **Add a new discussion topic** link, this will take you to a new page:
- 2 Complete the **Subject** (remember this is what people see so it should make sense) and the **Message**.

Subject*

Message* 

Normal 
Lang 
B *I* U    


Hello, I am reasearching....

- 3 You can add an attachment if you wish (the same as attaching to an email), then
- 4 Click on **Post for forum**

Format  HTML format

Subscription  

Attachment (Max size: 2MB) 

There are required fields in the

You have now posted a new discussion to the forum