



## **ReggieNet: Forums Tool**

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### **Before you start**

**FORUM:** A Forum is a collection of topics that the instructor has created. In each Forum, you can have a number of topics. Access to the entire Forum can be controlled through the forum settings.

**TOPIC:** A topic is a collection of one or more conversations (threads) that users have created because they have questions, want to make comments, need to reply, etc. Inside a Topic, you click on an individual Conversation to see what people have posted. Access to the topic can be controlled through the topic settings.

**CONVERSATION:** Conversations are threads made up of posts between individual users.

**POST:** Posts are comments uploaded by users. A group of linked Posts is called a Conversation.

### **Creating a New Forum**

1. If the Forums home page is not displayed, click FORUMS in the breadcrumb bar.
2. Click the **New Forum** tab near the top of the screen. The Forum Settings screen will be displayed.
3. In the **Forum Title** box, enter a name for the new forum. This box is required. The entry may be up to 250 characters long.
4. (OPTIONAL) To provide a short description of the forum under the forum title on the Discussions tool home page, enter that description (up to 255 characters) in the **Short Description** box.
5. To provide more information about the forum that site participants can access from the Discussions tool home page, enter that information in the **Description** box. Use the icons and boxes in the WYSIWYG editor to format the text as needed.
6. To add an attachment for participants to read, click **Add Attachment** and follow the instructions in the Adding an Attachment screen.
7. In the **Forum Posting** section, make selections for the following settings:
  - **Lock forum** (disable forum postings) - check this box if you want this setting selected by default for all topics added to the forum. Note that you may uncheck the setting for any topic. If the setting is selected for a topic, users will not be able to post messages.
  - **Moderate topics in forum** – check this box if you want this setting selected by default for all topics added to the forum. In the Permissions section, you may then specify which site roles have permission to moderate messages (the permission will be inactive if you do not select this setting). Note that you may uncheck the setting for any topic.

- **Require users to post before reading** – check this box if you want this setting selected by default for all topics added to the forum. If this setting is selected for a topic, users must post a message to view other posts for the topic. When users initially access the topic, they will see the following message:

 You must post to this topic before you can view any messages

Note that you may uncheck the setting for any topic.

8. In the **Availability** section of the screen, select when the forum will be displayed to site participants:
  - If you want the forum to be displayed immediately and not be hidden at a later date, click **Show immediately** with no time restriction.
  - If you want to set a date for when the forum is displayed and hidden, click Specify Dates. Then, enter the appropriate dates in the Open Date and Close Date fields that are displayed. **Note:** students will not be able to read posts after the Close Date.
9. In the **Mark All Messages in Conversations Read** section, check the box for “Automatically mark all messages in a conversation as read” if you want this setting selected by default for all topics added to the forum
10. If desired, associate this forum with a specific pre-existing item in the Gradebook tool by selecting from the “Select a Gradebook Item” pull-down list. (This pull-down list is located in the **Grading** section of the screen.)
 

**Note:** You first have to create a gradebook item in order to associate the grades in a forum.
11. In the **Permissions** section, make any necessary changes to the default permissions for the forum. Typically, you don’t need to make any changes.
12. Click **Save** or another appropriate choice.

## Adding a Topic

1. Find the forum to which you want to add the topic and click the **New Topic** link.
2. In the **Topic Title** box, enter a name for the new topic. This box is required.
3. (OPTIONAL)To provide a short description of the topic under the topic title on the Discussions tool home page, enter that description (up to 100 characters) in the **Short Description** box.
4. To provide more information about the topic that site participants can access from the Discussions tool home page, enter that information in the **Description** box. Use the icons and boxes in the WYSIWYG editor to format the text as needed.
5. To add an attachment for participants to read, click **Add Attachment** and follow the instructions in the Adding an Attachment screen.
6. In the **Topic Posting** section, make selections for the following settings:
  - **Lock topic** (disable topic postings) – select this option to prevent students from posting in the topic.
  - **Moderate topic** – select this option to require student posts to be approved before they become visible. Permission as to who can moderate can be adjusted once the topic has been saved.

- **Require users to post before reading** – users must post a message to view other posts for the topic. When users initially access the topic, they will see the following message:



- **Posts are anonymous** – users will not see author information. If this option is selected, another option will be shown which allows permissions to be adjusted for who can see author information.
7. In the **Availability** section of the screen, select when the forum will be displayed to site participants:
    - If you want the forum to be displayed immediately and not be hidden at a later date, click **Show immediately** with no time restriction.
    - If you want to set dates for when the forum is displayed and/or hidden, click Specify Dates. Then, enter the appropriate dates in the Open Date and Close Date fields that are displayed. **Note:** students will not be able to read posts after the Close Date.
  8. In the **Mark All Messages in Conversations Read** section, check the box for “Automatically mark all messages in a conversation as read”. This means users don’t have to mark individual messages as read.
  9. If desired, associate this topic with a specific pre-existing assignment in the Gradebook tool by selecting from the **Gradebook Item** pull-down list. (This pull-down list is located in the Grading section of the screen.)
 

**Note:** You first have to create a gradebook item in order to associate the grades in a topic.
  10. In the **Permissions** section, make any necessary changes to the default permissions for the topic. Typically, you don’t need to make any changes.
  11. Click **Save** or another appropriate choice.

### Organizing Forums and Topics

Once you’ve created a few Forums and the Topics within them, you can change how they are presented on the Forums Home Page by clicking on the **Organize** tab near the top. You will see a screen similar to the image below.

#### Organize Forums and Topics

It is possible to reorder Forums and Topics by adjusting the numbers. Lower numbers will appear at the top.

1	Lesson Builder
1	Lesson Builder
2	Workshop Group discussion
1	Paper 1 - Workshop group-1
2	Paper 1 - Workshop group-2

Adjust the numbers to re-order Forums (grey background boxes) and/or topics within forums.

## Posting

- To begin a thread in a Topic, click **Start a Conversation**.
  - Enter a title (required)
  - Format your message in the text editor
  - If you want to add an attachment, click the Add attachments button
  - Click Post
- To reply to a post in a topic, click on **Reply** when you are viewing the post.

## Grading Student Work in the Forums Tool

The Forums tool allows you to choose whether or not to grade each forum or topic you create. When you want to grade a forum or topic, be sure that you have chosen a particular gradebook item from the dropdown menu. You will need to create the item in the Gradebook tool before being able to select an option here (Refer to the Gradebook Help Documents for how to create Gradebook Items).

Once you have posted the forum, you can grade each student's forum post individually, giving both a grade (in number of points) and comments.

### Statistics

Once you have all of your forums set up, you can track how much your students are reading. Click the **Statistics and Grading** tab near the top to display statistics. You can view by user or topic

LINK ? HELP

**Forums / Statistics & Grading** Statistics & Grading by User | [Statistics & Grading by Topic](#)

Name	Authored	Read	Unread	Percent Read
<a href="#">Bristow, Charles</a>	2	3	0	100%
<a href="#">Gee, Jim</a>	0	0	3	0%

### Grading a Forum

- On the Forums home page, click the **More** link for the appropriate forum.
- From the displayed menu, select **Grade**. ReggieNet displays a Statistics & Grading page for that forum.

[Forums / Statistics & Grading / Weekly Discussions](#) Select a Gradebook item: discussions

Filter by group: All Participants

0

Name		Authored	Read	Unread	Percent Read	discussions (10.0 points possible)	Show Comments
<a href="#">zzStudent9_zzDemo9</a>	<a href="#">Details</a>	0	0	3	0%	<input type="text"/>	--Hidden--
<a href="#">zzStudent8_zzDemo8</a>	<a href="#">Details</a>	0	0	3	0%	<input type="text"/>	--Hidden--
<a href="#">zzStudent7_zzDemo7</a>	<a href="#">Details</a>	1	3	0	100%	<input type="text" value="8.0"/>	--Hidden--

3. On the Statistics & Grading page, you can view all messages a student has authored in the forum by clicking on the appropriate student's name.
2. Grade participation in the forum. You may only enter grades as points, and only to the maximum allowed for the associated gradebook item. Click on **Show Comments** if you'd like to give comments. Enter scores and comments in the appropriate fields. To apply one score to all students without a grade, enter the score in the displayed field and click **Apply Grade to all Ungraded**. Lastly, click **Submit Grades**.

### Grading a Topic

1. From the Forums tool home page, access the Statistics & Grading page for that topic. You can do so in one of two ways:
  - Click the **More** link for the appropriate topic. From the displayed menu, select Grade.
  - In the tool menu bar, click **Statistics & Grading**. Then, click **Statistics & Grading by Topic**. From the list of topics in the topics column, click on the appropriate topic.
2. In either case, ReggieNet displays a Statistics & Grading page for that topic.
3. On the Statistics & Grading page, you can view all messages a student has authored in the forum to which the topic belongs, by clicking on the appropriate student's name.
4. Grade participation in the topic by clicking on the **Grade** link for each student. You may only enter grades as points, and only to the maximum allowed for the associated gradebook item. Enter scores and comments in the appropriate fields. To apply one score to all students without a grade, enter the score in the displayed field and click **Apply Grade to all Ungraded**. Lastly, click **Submit Grades**.

## Creating Group Discussions

You need to first create groups using Manage Groups function in **Site Info**.

### Creating Groups

1. Click **Manage Group**
2. Click **Create New Group**
3. Enter Group Title
4. Click student name(s) and click the > button to move the students to the Group Member List
5. Click **Add**

### Creating Auto Group – randomly assign students to groups

1. Click **Manage Groups**
2. Click **Auto Groups**
3. Click on the check box labeled "Students"
4. Select **Create random groups from members with the selected role**.

5. Select **Split by number of groups needed** or **Split by number of users needed per group** and provide required information.
6. Click **Add**

### **Creating Group Discussion**

1. Before you start a new topic, please create a new forum for the group discussions. In the **Forum Setting**, under **Permissions**, make sure that the Permission Level dropdown for **Student** role is set to **None**.
2. Create a topic by clicking **New Topic**
3. All the options are the same as you'd create a new topic for the whole class, but if you have created groups in the site, there will be a section labeled **Automatically Create Topics** just before the **Permissions** section. Select the option "Automatically create multiple topics for groups"
4. Select the boxes for groups.
5. Click **Save**. This will automatically create the same topic for each group. Permissions will be automatically set so that only the members of the group will have access.
6. If you have selected a Gradebook item when the group topics are created, all topics will send to that same gradebook item.