

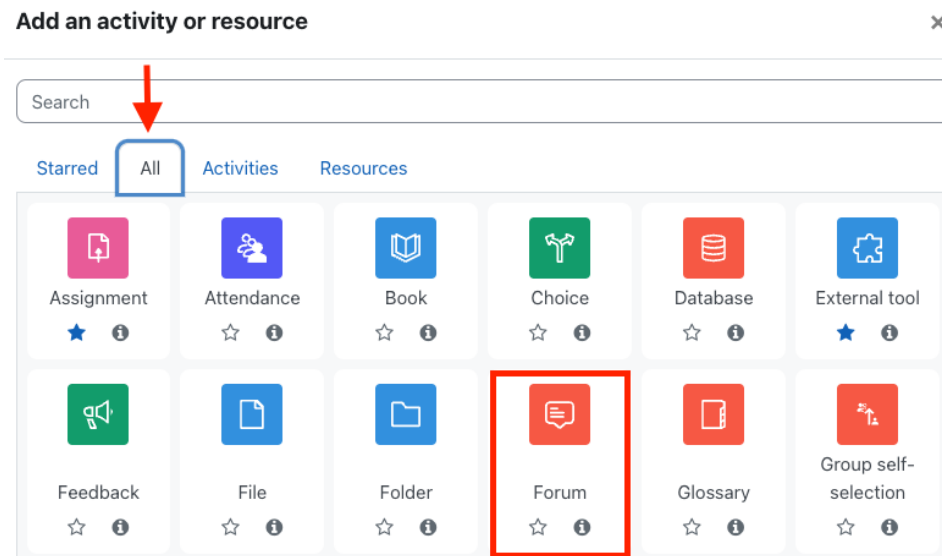
# Discussion Forums

The **Forum** activity provides opportunities for asynchronous communication in a course. Forums can be useful for organizing online discussions and providing a collaborative space for students. On this page, you'll find the steps to create a forum in AsULearn.

This video walks through adding a Forum to your course:

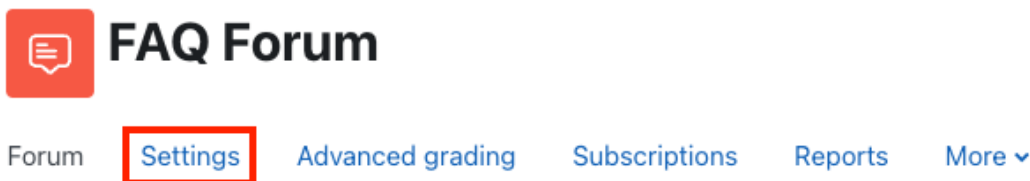
## Step-by-step guide

1. From your course page, enable the **Edit mode** toggle (top right).
2. In the desired topic of your course, click the **+Add an activity or resource** link.
3. Click on the **Forum** activity in the panel, then click **Add** at the bottom of the popup. If you do not see the Forum activity, be sure you have selected the **All** or **Activities** tab:



4. On the **Adding a new forum** page, enter the (required) **Forum name** and (optional) **Description**.
5. Modify settings in the sections that follow (see below), then click one of the **Save** buttons at the bottom.
6. From your course page, disable the **Edit mode** toggle at the top right.

**Note:** The **Forum settings** screen can also be opened from the **Settings** link within the Forum when Edit mode is disabled for the course:



## Forum activity settings

Enter a **Forum name**. This is the title of the link that will appear on the course main page.

Enter a **Description** for your forum. Include the directions and expectations for this forum activity. This description will also display beneath the Forum link on your course homepage if you click **Display description on course page**.

- Select your forum type. There are six types of forums, explained in this video:

**Announcements forum** This is a special forum that is created by default in every course. **Only the instructor** can post to this forum, and all course participants are forced subscribed (so they cannot opt out of receiving the content of the instructor posts in their email). Announcement forum posts are only emailed to students if the course is **visible to students**. See the [Email Students in Your Class](#) article for more info.

The other 5 forum types are:

- **A single simple discussion** - A single topic discussion developed on one page, which is useful for short focused discussions (cannot be used with separate groups).
- **Each person posts one discussion** - Each person can post exactly one new discussion topic (everyone can reply to them); this is useful when you want each student to start a discussion about something like *Reflection on the week's topic*, and everyone else responds to one reflection of their choosing.
- **Q and A forum** - Instead of initiating discussions, teachers pose a question in the initial post of a discussion. Students reply to the post with an answer, but they **will not see the replies of other students** to the question in that discussion until 15 minutes after they have themselves replied to the same discussion. A good way to force original thinking when it is needed, as opposed to a post like "I agree with Mary Beth."
- **Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format** - The first few lines of an entry are displayed, with the newest entries displayed first. Old school blog-style.
- **Standard forum for general use** - An open forum discussion where anyone can start a new topic at any time; this is the best general-purpose forum. This is the most popular and may be the easiest to begin using.



On the **Adding a new forum** page, click the arrow to the left of each settings section to expand that section's settings; or click **Expand all** in the



top right to open all sections. See the blue question marks on the settings screen for explanations of settings not covered here.

## Availability

- **Due Date** - Although this sets the due date in the calendar, it only identifies the desired deadline. Students can still post after this date.
- **Cut Off Date** - When set, the forum will no longer accept new posts or replies after this date (effectively "locking" the forum and making it "read only").

## Attachments and word count

Teachers can specify the maximum file size for attachments, the number of attachments possible on a single post, and if a word count will display.

## Subscription and tracking

Subscribing to a Forum sends an email to the user whenever there is a post. Click the **Subscription mode** dropdown to select:

- **Optional subscription** - Participants can choose whether to be subscribed. Select this option if you do not want an email every time someone makes a post.
- **Forced subscription** - Everyone is subscribed and cannot unsubscribe.
- **Auto subscription** - Everyone is subscribed initially but can choose to unsubscribe at any time.
- **Subscription disabled** - Subscriptions are not allowed.

**Note:** Changing the **Subscription mode** will only affect users who enroll in the course in the future, and not existing users.

When **Read tracking** is enabled, participants can track messages that are read and unread in the forum and in discussions, as unread posts remain highlighted.

## Turnitin plagiarism plugin settings

If you **Enable Turnitin** (select **Yes**) on a forum and configure the desired settings, both the text of students' posts, and any attached files, will generate an originality report and score from Turnitin with a link (or links) to the results on the post. Please see [Turnitin Plagiarism Plugin for Assignments & Forums](#) for details.

## Whole forum grading

When enabled, this setting allows teachers to score forum participation in the [Gradebook](#). Advanced grading methods such as rubrics and grading guides may also be used by selecting different Grading Methods.

## ▼ Whole forum grading

Grade



Type

Point ↕

Maximum grade

100

Grading method



Simple direct grading ↕

Grade category



Uncategorized ↕

Grade to pass



Default setting for  
"Notify students"



No ↕

**NOTE:** If using whole forum grading, numeric scores will always be recorded to the Gradebook. When a rubric or a grading guide are used, students can also click the **View grades** button in the overall forum (not a specific post) to view their individual rubric or marking guide grades and comments.

View grades

## Ratings

The ratings feature existed before the **Whole forum grading** option was available. Ratings is not as robust a tool for grading.

## Common module settings

Specify Availability (**Show** or **Hide from students**) and Group settings.

## Private replies option

Within a forum, teachers can make private replies to students. After clicking reply to a post, simply tick the **Reply privately** checkbox below the message window. The resulting post will only be visible to the participant to whom you replied.

Write your reply...

Post to forum

Cancel

☒ Reply privately

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