

Assessing Discussions in Brightspace

To create a Discussion Board in your module, click on Module Tools>Discussions. First you must create a Forum within which different Topics can be created. This helps keep your discussions organised.

Once you have created a Topic discussion area within a Forum, you can configure that topic for assessment. To do so choose the Assessment tab. If you have already saved and closed the topic, you can choose the dropdown arrow beside the Topic title and choose 'Edit Topic', then choose the Assessment tab.

Edit Topic - Assignment Queries ▾

Properties Restrictions **Assessment** Objectives

Assessment

Grade Item

-- Choose a grade item -- ▾ [\[New Grade Item\]](#) ?

Score Out Of

?

Rubrics

[Add Rubric](#)

No rubrics selected.

[\[Create Rubric in New Window\]](#)

Posts

Allow assessment of individual posts ?

Calculation

-- Select a calculation method -- ▾ Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero ?

[Save and Close](#) [Save and New](#) [Save](#) [Cancel](#)

The following calculation methods are available to assess discussions

Calculation method	Definition
Average post score	This calculation method averages all of the post scores included per user.
Maximum post score	This calculation method identifies the highest score of all the post scores included per user.
Minimum post score	This calculation method identifies the lowest score of all the post scores included per user.
Mode post score - Highest on multiple	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.
Mode post score - Lowest on multiple	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.
Sum of post scores	This calculation method sums up all the scores on posts within a topic.

Configuring your discussion topic for assessment

In the **Assessment** tab, configure your topic for assessment by doing any 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 **New Grade Item** 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 one or more existing rubrics, or click the **Create Rubric in New Window** link to create a new rubric for the topic. You can assess one or more rubrics for each learner in the course, and learners can view completed, published rubrics in Class Progress, Grades, Content, Discussions, and User 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.
- 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. In the **Assess Post** pop-up, you can view the post you are assessing, along with any attached rubrics and fields to add in personal feedback.

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. The Total calculates automatically based on the rubric criteria, or you can manually enter the Total and

override the calculation. Note that the calculated or chosen Total is automatically populated in the **Topic Score** field. To return the Topic Score to the calculated score from the rubric, click **Clear Override**.

- If learning outcomes are aligned to the discussion topic, using the scale defined by an administrator, assess the learner's progress against each learning outcome. For example, achievement levels might include the following: Does Not Meet Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectations. For more information, see [Discussion](#).
 - In the **General Feedback** field, enter feedback comments.
5. Click **Save Draft** to retain the assessment results and publish at a later time. Click **Publish** to immediately release the assessment results to the learner in Assignments, Discussions, Grades, Content, and User Progress simultaneously.

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.

You must publish the score in order for Brightspace Learning Environment to update the grade item in the grade book. 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, and makes the grade visible to learners in Discussions, Content, and User Progress. Any additional changes you make to a user's score automatically updates in the grade book. Note that you can only link numeric grade items to discussion topics.

1. On the navbar, 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 **Draft** check box in the **Status** column beside each user whose score you want to release. Click **Save**.
 - To publish scores for all users, click **Publish All Scores**. Click **Yes**.



Additional help can be sought from the D2L's Brightspace End User Support Team. Contact them via the Help link on the menu bar when you log into Brightspace.