

## Creating a discussion forum


The Forum activity is a powerful communication and discussion tool. Tutors and students are provided with an area where they can post messages and reply to each other at any time.

### Setting up a forum

Tutors may opt to create various forums within a VLE area, each of which is used for different purposes. Apart from the *Announcements* forum (refer to a separate [quick reference guide](#)), a tutor might consider providing students with a forum to be specifically used to discuss VLE area related matter.

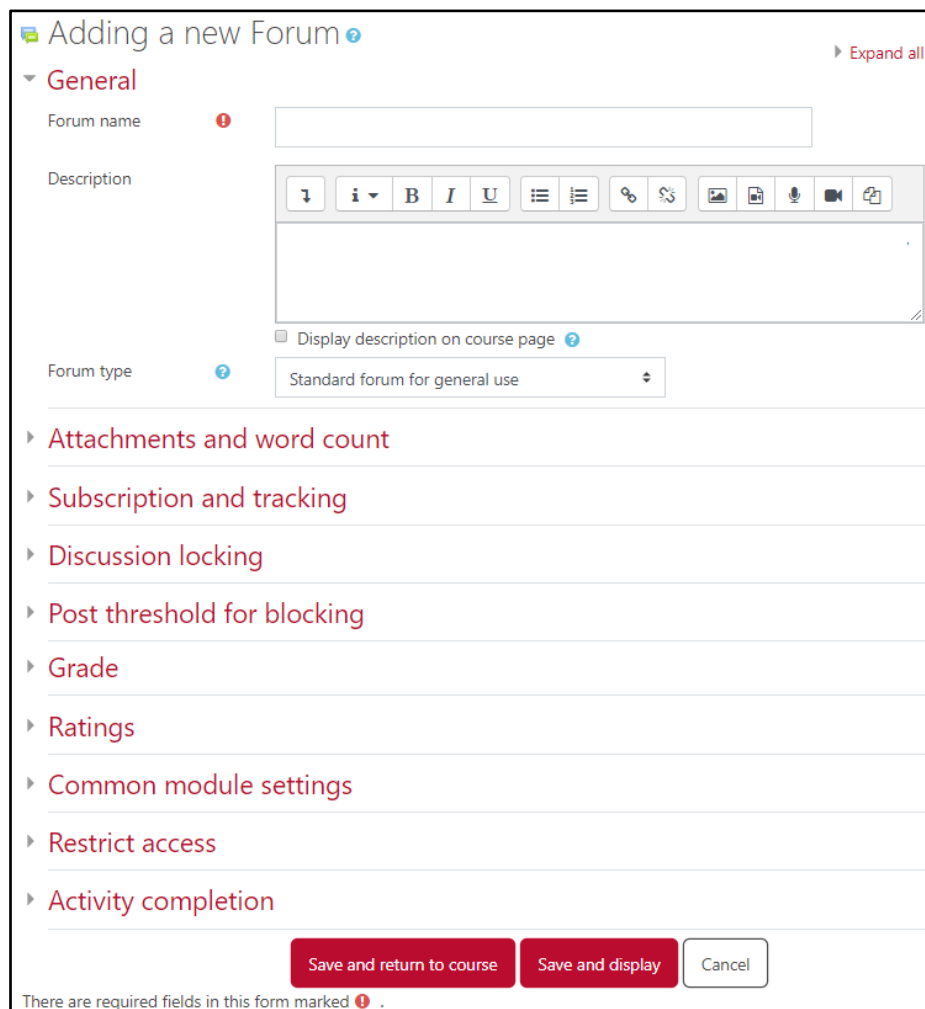
To create a forum:

1. Click the **Turn editing on** button (top right corner).



Each section in the middle block displays two drop-down fields: **Add a resource...** and **Add an activity...**

2. Scroll down to the topic / week where you want to add the forum.
3. Click the drop-down arrow next to the **Add an activity...** field.
4. Click **Forum**.




5. In the **Forum name** field, type a short name for the forum e.g. FAQ Forum. This will be displayed in the VLE area homepage.

6. In the **Description** field, type in a description or introductory text for the discussion. It is good practice to include precise instructions for students regarding the subject of the forum and any possible assessment criteria that might be used in this forum.
7. From the **Forum type** drop-down menu, choose the preferred forum type. Typically, select **Standard forum for general use**.
8. Set the **Subscription mode** as desired, by clicking on the **Subscription and tracking** section. When a participant is subscribed to a forum it means they will receive email copies of forum posts.

There are 4 subscription mode options:

- **Optional subscription** - Participants can choose whether to be subscribed
  - **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.
9. Set **Read tracking for this forum** if you want students to easily identify read and unread messages in the forum and in discussions. This is also enabled from the **Subscription and tracking** section.
  10. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

#### Note that:

- Students have a 30 minute time window to edit or delete message posts they made to a forum. Permalink | Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply  
On the other hand, tutors do not have such restrictions as they can edit or delete any message posts (including students') made to a forum. You will notice that the links to edit or delete message posts are added to the bottom of each post.
- When you copy text from MS Word (or any other word processor) and paste this to the HTML editor, it is recommended that you then press the **Clear formatting**  tool to remove unnecessary HTML tags. If not removed, these tags might appear as extra text in line with your message post.

Another way to prevent the unnecessary tags from showing is to:

1. Open a simple text editor, such as Notepad.
  2. From MS Word (or the word processor you are using), copy the text that you wrote.
  3. Paste the copied text into Notepad.
  4. Copy the text again, this time from Notepad.
  5. Paste the text into the discussion forum.
- Further detailed information about the use of Forums is available in a separate [guide](#).