

Five Things You Should Know about Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are completely redesigned in ANGEL 7.3. There are dozens of new features designed to better facilitate teaching and learning as well as reduce the amount of time required for instructors to manage them. A discussion forum is added on the **Lessons** tab. It also appears in the **Discussion Forums** component on the **Communicate** tab by default.

Here are five things you should know about using **discussion forums**:

1. There is more flexibility when viewing a discussion. You can choose between several view modes: **Threaded**, a hierarchical list of **Post Titles**; **Nested**, similar to Threaded but with the body text displayed; **At a Glance** (available only to course editors), provides the instructor with an immediate view on the activity within a forum; and **Search**, displays only the posts meeting your specified criteria. These options are located across the top left of the discussion forum view.
2. The new navigation controls, located across the top right of the discussion, allow you to quickly view and navigate between messages. You have the option of moving between messages either one reply at a time or one top-level post at a time by selecting your choice from the pull-down menu and using the arrow buttons. Additionally, you have the option to save your preferred navigational setting.
3. **Post list controls** let you manage the posts in the post list. They include:
 - **[+] and [-]** expand and collapse all threads within the discussion.
 - **Flag** sorts posts by flag value. Each flag color has a value of 0-9.
 - **Score** sorts posts and replies by instructor score.
 - **Rating** sorts posts and replies by their average peer rating.
4. **Instructor options** in the pull-down list at the bottom left of every message. They include:
 - **Reject**: Rejects the current message, setting its status to "rejected."
 - **Move**: move a message to another location within the current forum.
 - **Make Sticky**: Marks a message as being "sticky." Sticky posts are sorted first and appear at the top of the forum; replies made sticky are listed first underneath their respective posts.
 - **Lock**: Prevents further replies from being added to the thread from that point forward.
 - **Delete**: This delete command is a "soft delete." Instructors can view all deleted posts in Search View, and can undelete a post.
5. Grading of a discussion forum can be accomplished in two locations: within the individual discussion forum on the **Lessons** tab, by selecting **Utilities** and within the gradebook, accessed on the **Manage** tab.



Discussion forum in threaded view

To Find out More about Discussion Forums

To learn more about this and other topics related to ANGEL, Penn State's Course Management System, check out the ANGEL Community Hub at <http://ets.tlt.psu.edu/angel/>.