

Guide to Using Discussion Forums

The Discussion Forums are an important part of studying on iLearn, as they allow you to interact with your module tutor and fellow students. They can be an extremely helpful way of finding answers to any questions or concerns around your course that you may have, and so it is worth checking them regularly.

This is a quick guide of how to make use of them.

Accessing the Discussion Forums

The Discussion Forums can be accessed from each main module page under '**My Resources**'. Simply click on them to open them.



In every module, there will be a link to the **News Forum**, where your Module Tutor and Student Support staff may post important notices and updates about your module, such as deadline and study resources.

Another important forum is the **General Discussion Forum**. In this forum, you can discuss your studies with your tutor and fellow students. You can create new discussions and participate in current discussions.

Finally, there is the **Group Learning Space**. This is the area where you post your responses to any Module Tasks set by your Tutor, and can respond to any discussions that your tutor has started about learning materials.

Discussion Overview

When you have opened a particular forum, you can view all of the discussions taking place in that forum. You are then able to open the discussions, or create a new discussion topic.

The screenshot shows the iLearn forum interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'My Modules', and 'Careers'. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Courses > ARU > ARU - BSc Computing Level 6 (v2) > Anglia Ruskin University - Understanding Systems (Mobile Computing) > General > General Discussion Forum'. A search bar is also present here. The main content area is titled 'General Discussion Forum' and includes a welcome message and a button to 'Add a new discussion topic'. Below this is a table of discussions.

Discussion	Started by	Group	Replies	Unread	Last post
Tutor welcome...	Test Student	Active	2	2 ✓	Test Student Tue, 10 May 2016, 10:48 PM
Hello grate people	Test Student	Active	1	2 ✓	Test Student Sun, 8 May 2016, 11:05 AM
Introduction	Test Student	Active	1	2 ✓	Test Student Sun, 8 May 2016, 11:04 AM

Callout 1: Click here to start a new discussion topic (points to the 'Add a new discussion topic' button).

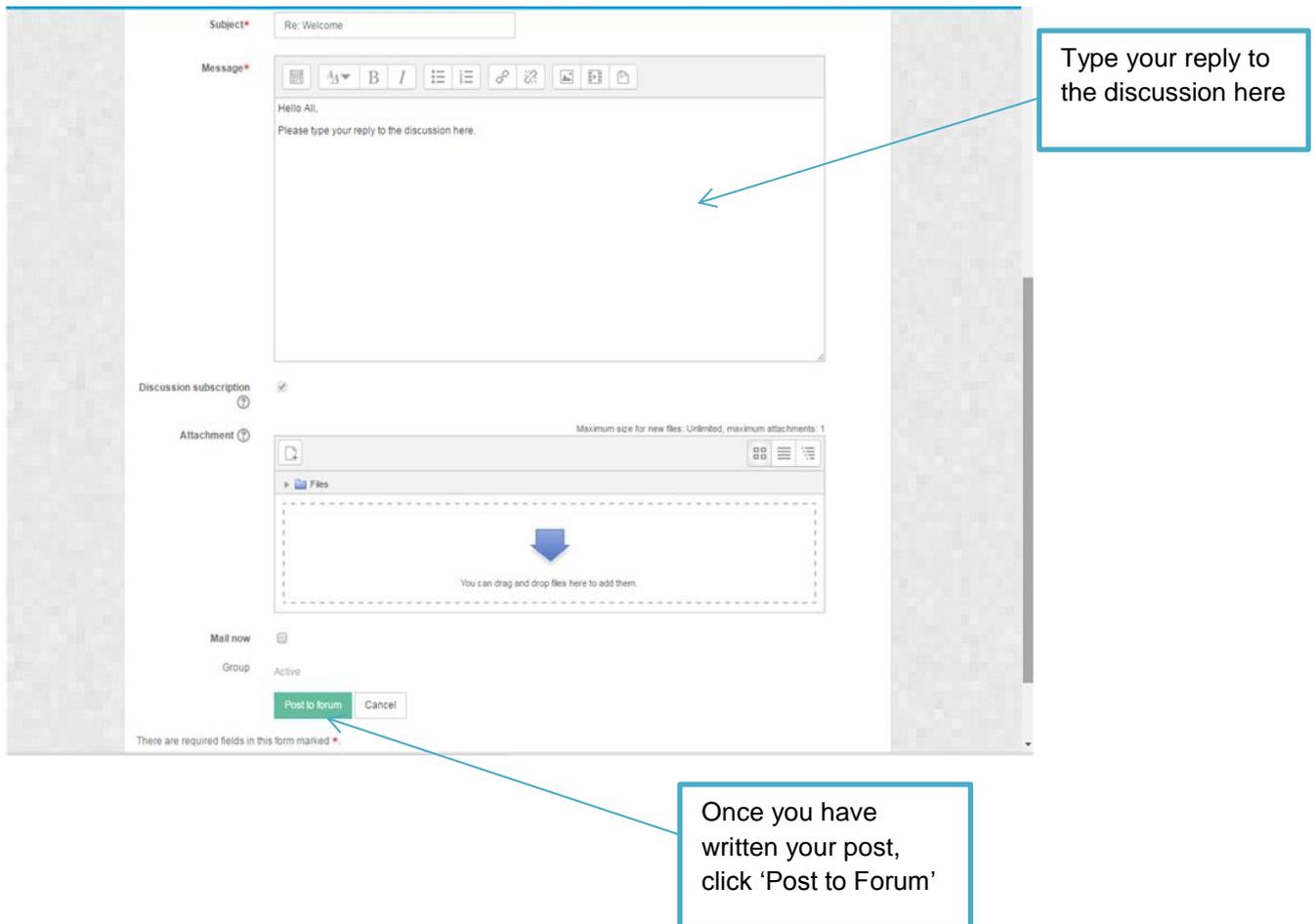
Callout 2: Click on the title of the discussion to go to the particular discussion (points to the 'Introduction' row).

Callout 3: Click on the name of the person to view their ilearn profile (points to the 'Test Student' name in the 'Introduction' row).

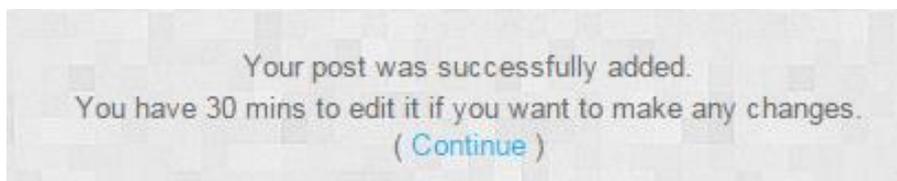
Entering a Discussion

Once you have opened a discussion, it will look similar to the screen shown below. The post at the top will be from the person who started the discussion, and below this you will be able to view any replies. You may reply to a specific post (perhaps you want to specifically respond to their comment or question), or you can reply to the main topic. To add your views to the discussion, simply click the **'Reply'** button next to the post you want to respond to.

The screenshot shows a forum thread titled "Hello" under the category "Broken Link (Culture)". At the top right, there is a "Subscribe" button. A callout box points to this button with the text: "To receive notifications regarding particular forum post , please click on **Subscribe**." Below the main post, there are two replies. The first reply is from a user with a blue header, dated Saturday, 30 April 2016, 5:32 PM, with the text "Welcome to the module Karen... the best of luck". A callout box points to the "Show parent | Reply" link below this reply with the text: "Here you can edit or delete your own posts. You will only be able to edit them for the first 30 minutes after posting". The second reply is from "Guide User" dated Friday, 20 May 2016, 10:31 AM, with the text "Type your message here." and a "Show parent | Edit | Delete | Reply" link. A callout box points to the "Edit | Delete" part of this link with the same text as the previous callout.



Once you have posted the message to the forum, you will see a message confirming that your post was successfully added. You may edit your post for up to 30 minutes after it was added. After a few seconds you will be taken back to the Main Discussion Page. You can then check that you are happy with your post and either continue browsing, or change your response. After 30 minutes, you will no longer be able to make any changes.



Forums and Profiles

To find out further information about the participants of a chat or Forum, you can click on their name or image at any time. This will take you to the profile overview screen.

The screenshot shows a user profile overview for 'Test Student'. The profile is organized into several sections:

- User details:** Includes 'Edit profile', 'Email address: text@arden.ac.uk', and 'Country: United Kingdom'.
- Course details:** Lists 'Course profiles' such as 'ARU - Induction', 'Support', 'Careers Module', and 'Skills Mini Modules'.
- Roles:** Shows the user's role as 'Student'.
- Group:** Shows the user's group as 'Active'.
- Miscellaneous:** Includes links for 'Full profile', 'View all blog entries', 'Notes', 'Forum posts', and 'Forum discussions'.
- Reports:** Includes links for 'Today's logs', 'All logs', 'Outline report', 'Complete report', and 'Grade'.

A 'Message' button is located below the user's profile picture.

You can send a message directly to another student or tutor on ilearn here.

Here you can view all the Forum posts that a user has made

Managing Discussion Forums Communications

To manage what updates you get from the discussion forums please follow the steps below:

The screenshot shows the ilearn user dashboard. At the top left is the ilearn logo with the tagline 'interactive inspirational international'. To the right of the logo is a contact number: 0845 7883368 International: +44 (0) 24 765 15700. Below the logo are navigation links: Home, My Modules, and Careers. The main content area features a large banner for NUS (National Union of Students) with a pink and blue overlay containing text about getting an NUS extra card and saving money. Below the banner are three main sections: 'My Study Skills' (Develop your academic skills), 'My Modules' (Access your modules here), and 'My Career' (Access Arden University's Careers area). On the right side, there is a user profile for 'Thomasina Test' with a dropdown menu. The menu options are: View profile, Edit profile, Messages, Preferences (highlighted by a blue callout box), and Log out. Below the menu are sections for Messages (No messages waiting), Calendar (May 2016), and Blog menu (Blog entries, Add a new entry, Search).

You can manage what updates you get from the discussion forums by clicking on your name and selecting 'Preferences'. New window will open as below.

From screen below, please select 'Forum Preferences'.

The screenshot shows the ilearn 'Preferences' page. The breadcrumb trail is: Home > Dashboard > Preferences. The main content area is titled 'Preferences' and is divided into three sections: 'User account', 'Blogs', and 'Badges'. Under 'User account', there are five options: Edit profile, Preferred language, Forum preferences (highlighted by a blue callout box), Editor preferences, and Messaging. Under 'Blogs', there are three options: Blog preferences, External blogs, and Register an external blog. Under 'Badges', there are three options: Manage badges, Badge preferences, and Backpack settings. On the right side, there is a 'Navigation' section with links to Home, Dashboard, Site pages, and My courses. Below that is a section for 'Arden University Local Time' showing 'Thu 19 May 2016 09:58:12 am'.

Select an option from list below to choose when you get e-mails about forum posts.

The screenshot shows the 'Forum preferences' page for a user named 'Guide User'. The page has a breadcrumb trail: Home > Dashboard > Preferences > User account > Forum preferences. The main content area is titled 'Forum preferences' and contains three sections: 'Email digest type', 'Forum tracking', and 'Save changes' buttons. The 'Email digest type' section has a dropdown menu with four options: 'Complete (daily email with full posts)', 'No digest (single email per forum post)', 'Complete (daily email with full posts)', and 'Subjects (daily email with subjects only)'. The 'Forum tracking' section has a dropdown menu with one option: 'Yes: highlight new posts for me'. The 'Save changes' button is green, and the 'Cancel' button is white. Three callout boxes provide explanations for the email digest options: 'No digest: receive an e-mail every time someone posts in a forum that you are subscribed to.' (pointing to 'No digest (single email per forum post)'), 'Complete: receive a daily e-mail containing all the new posts in forums that you are subscribed to.' (pointing to 'Complete (daily email with full posts)'), and 'Subjects: receive a daily e-mail with a list of which forum discussions people have posted in over the last day and links to access these discussions.' (pointing to 'Subjects (daily email with subjects only)').

To choose whether to be **automatically subscribed** to any forum that you post in, please follow steps below:

The screenshot shows the 'Forum preferences' page for a user named 'Guide User'. The page has a breadcrumb trail: Home > Dashboard > Preferences > User account > Forum preferences. The main content area is titled 'Forum preferences' and contains three sections: 'Email digest type', 'Forum auto-subscribe', and 'Forum tracking'. The 'Email digest type' section has a dropdown menu with one option: 'Complete (daily email with full posts)'. The 'Forum auto-subscribe' section has a dropdown menu with one option: 'Yes: when I post, subscribe me to that forum dis'. The 'Forum tracking' section has a dropdown menu with one option: 'Yes: highlight new posts for me'. The 'Save changes' button is green, and the 'Cancel' button is white. A callout box explains the 'Forum auto-subscribe' option: 'Choose an option here to decide whether to be automatically subscribed to any forum that you post in. If you are subscribed, this means that you will receive updates when anybody else posts in that forum.' (pointing to 'Yes: when I post, subscribe me to that forum dis').

You can manage your unread forum messages **here**.

Home | My Modules | Careers | Guide User

Home > Dashboard > Preferences > User account > Forum preferences

Forum preferences

Email digest type [?]
Complete (daily email with full posts)

Forum auto-subscribe
Yes: when I post, subscribe me to that forum dis

Forum tracking
Yes: highlight new posts for me

Save changes | Cancel

My Resources

- News Forum
- General Discussion Forum 10 unread posts
- Group Learning Space 14 unread posts

Show Archived Forums

Choosing 'yes' in this field means that you will see how many unread messages you have in each forum, for example as below:

Once you have completed all the changes to your preferences, press the **Save changes** button at the bottom of the page.

Email Preferences

Within each forum you can also **subscribe / unsubscribe** from email alerts from that particular forum.

The image shows a forum interface with several navigation links on the left and a modal window on the right. The modal window, titled 'Email preferences', is highlighted with a red border. It contains the following text: 'To receive email alerts when forum messages are posted to this module, please click the button below.' Below this text is a green 'Subscribe' button. The modal also includes a 'Calendar' section showing a calendar for December 2016, with the 8th highlighted. Below the calendar is an 'Events key' section with options for 'Everyone', 'Module', 'Group', and 'My events'. At the bottom of the modal, there is a 'Online users' section showing '(last 5 minutes) None'.

We hope that you have found this guide helpful, and that you will benefit from using the Discussion Forums.

If you have any further questions regarding this, please contact the Student Support Team (contact details can be found in the module information on ilearn).