

Discussion forums are particularly useful for supporting group work. Group forums allow teams to "meet" asynchronously and to share files easily. Set up a group forum to make it easier for your students to complete a team project or to facilitate peer review. Only one forum is needed to serve multiple groups. This guide explains how to set up and manage a forum for groups.

Forum Types for Groups

Single simple discussion is the only forum type that will **not** work with group settings. These forums will support group work: *Standard forum for general use*, *Each person posts one discussion*, *Q and A forums* (see special note, next page), and *Standard discussion displayed in blog-like format*.

Set Up Groups in Forum Settings

The **Group mode** is found in the forum's **Common module settings** (Figure 1). Select **Separate** or **Visible** groups to limit access to the discussion to groups of students rather than having the forum open to the entire class.

- **Separate groups** – Posts will only be visible to the members of each group (and to the instructor). Students will not be able to see posts made by other groups.
- **Visible groups** – All posts will be visible to all students, but only members of a group will be able to reply to the posts of their fellow group members. **Caution:** The visible group setting can be confusing to students who expect to be able to reply in all forums.

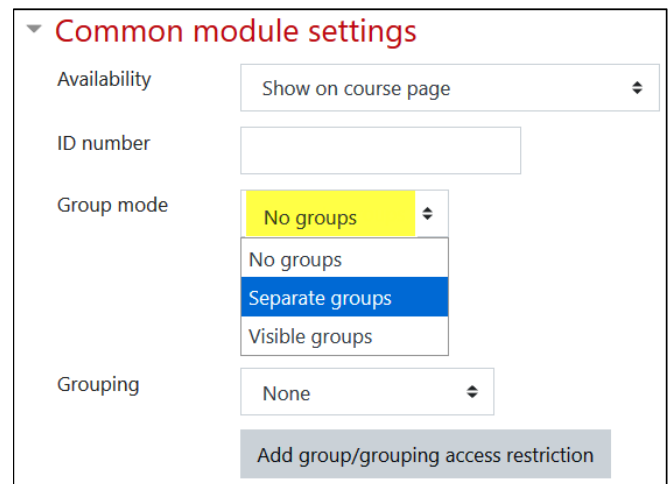


Figure 1: Common Module Settings

A **Grouping** is a group of groups. If you only have one set of groups in your course, leave the **Grouping** field set to **None**. If you do have multiple kinds of groups (CRN sections and group project teams, for instance), see this [guide to groupings](#) for managing sets of groups with groupings.

Set Up Groups on the Course Page

When editing is turned on in your course, you will see one of these icons adjacent to each activity posted in your course (Figure 2). In Figure 3 for example, the *Introductions* discussion forum is set for **no groups**, the *Term Projects* forum is set for **separate groups**, while the *Project Management at the Movies* forum is set for **visible groups**.

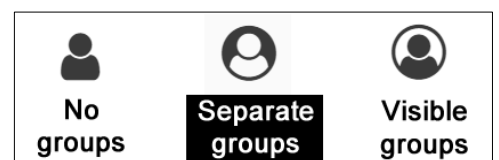


Figure 2: Group Status Icons

To change the group status of a forum, click on the icon to cycle through the options until you reach the desired status. Note that if you need to apply a grouping to a forum, you'll need to open the forum in edit view and update the **Common module settings**.

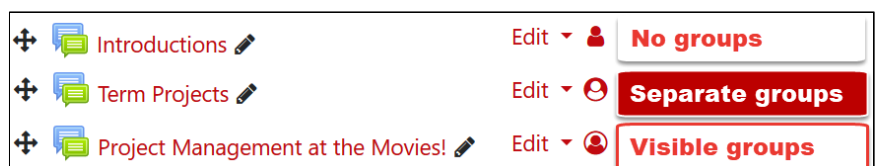


Figure 3: Group icons

Forums for Groups

Important Things to Know

There are several elements to consider when using groups for forums:

- You only need to create one forum for groups to work in—you don't need to create a separate forum for each group.
- Students not enrolled in a group won't be able to make any posts in a forum set for Separate or Visible groups. [Monitor enrollment](#) to make sure that every student is enrolled in a group.
- If you want to make a post that all groups can respond to, click on the **Advanced** link below the textbox and check the **Post a copy to all groups** box (Figure 4)—otherwise students will be able to read your post, but won't be able to reply to it.
- If you use the *Q and A forum* format, you **must** post an initial thread to enable students to reply. Use the **Post a copy to all groups** option to post the same prompt for all groups or designate a specific group to receive the prompt by selecting it from the **Group** pull-down menu shown in Figure 4.

Figure 5 illustrates a group forum where the instructor has chosen to post a copy of a discussion thread to all groups. Each group member will now be able to reply to the instructor's thread and incorporate that thread within their group discussion.

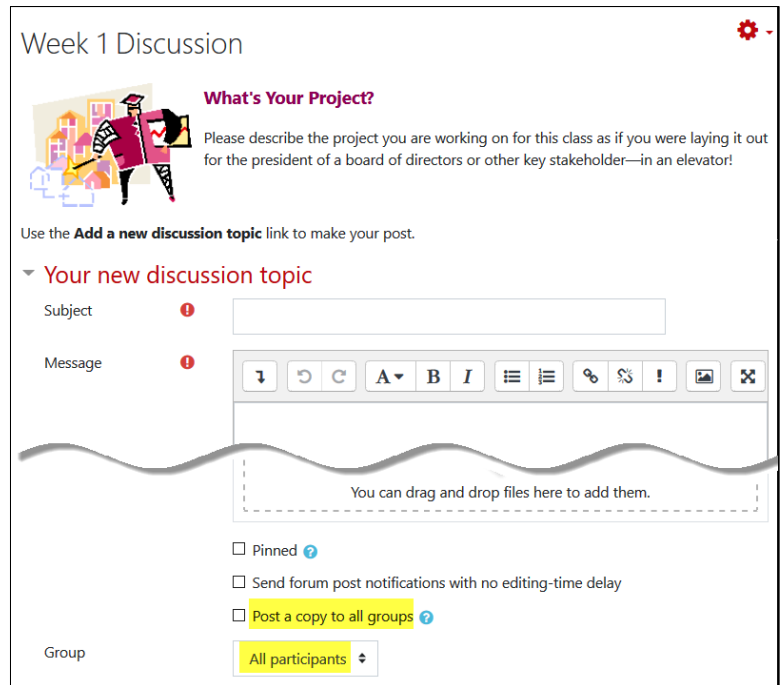


Figure 4: Post to All Groups

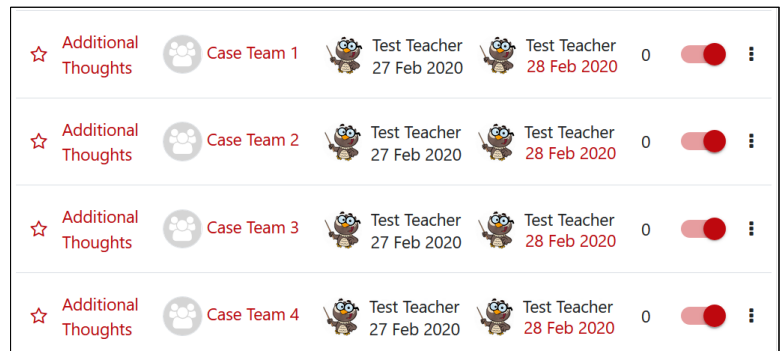


Figure 5: Group Posts