Succeed Training - Using the Discussions Board

About the Discussions Board
The Discussions Board is an online bulletin board within Succeed. It allows both students and staff to post messages and reply to messages posted by others. The Discussions Board may be divided into forums or fora (Figure 2), which in turn contain threads of discussion. A thread includes the initial post and all replies to it.

How to Access the Discussion Board

The default location of the Discussions link is on the Course menu in your Succeed module. It is possible however that your course instructor has linked to the Discussions elsewhere in your module.

1. On the Course Menu, click on the Discussions link (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - The Discussions Link on the Course Menu
Viewing a Discussion Forum

On entering the Discussion Board you will see the list of fora that have been set up for your Course. For each a forum, Succeed displays the total number of posts, the number of unread posts, and the number of users who have participated in the forum.

**Figure 2 – Forums in the Discussion Board**

1. **Forum title**: Click the forum title to view the messages. Forums containing unread posts appear in bold.
2. **Total Posts / Total Participants**: View data on the number of posts and participants in each forum
3. **Unread Posts**: The Unread Posts column provides one-click access to the forum’s unread messages.

**To enter a forum**

You can view any threads in a forum by either:

2. Clicking on the Unread Posts. This option will just let you view the messages that you haven’t read.
Forum Features

When you access a forum in the Discussion Board, a list of threads appears (Figure 3) with the following information:

1. Date: Displays the date that the thread was created.
2. Thread: Displays the name of the thread.
3. Author: Displays the name of user who created the thread.
4. Status: Indicates whether the thread is published, locked, hidden, or a draft.
5. Unread Posts: Displays the number of posts not yet accessed.
6. Total Posts: Includes both read and unread posts.

Figure 3 – Threads in a Forum using the ‘List View’

A. Use the breadcrumbs to navigate to a previous page. If you use the browser navigation controls; page load errors may occur.
B. Use the Action Bar functions to perform various actions, including:
   a. **Create Thread**: Add a new thread to a forum.
   b. **Search**: Search for Discussion Board content. The search field is collapsed by default to save screen space.
   c. **Thread Actions**: Make a selection from the drop-down list. Edit the status of the selected threads and perform other actions, such as marking threads read or unread and setting or clearing flags. Flags mark threads for later attention.
   d. **Collect**: Gather selected threads onto one page where posts can be sorted, filtered, or printed.
C. Select one or more threads or select the check box in the header row to select all threads for an action, such as collecting.

D. Click a thread title to read the posts. Forum titles containing unread posts appear in bold type.

E. Click **Edit Paging** to determine the number of items to view per page. Type a number in the box and click **Go**. Click the **X** to close the pop-up box. This is useful when the number of forums exceed the default of 25 per page resulting in more than one page of forums.

### Reading Posts in a Discussions Thread

1. To read all posts in a thread, click on the title of the thread (Figure 4). The original post and all replies within the thread will display in a new page.

2. When viewing posts in a thread this way, posts will automatically be marked as read.

### Reading Unread Posts in a Discussions Thread and Marking as Read

1. To read unread posts in a thread, click on the unread posts link (Figure 5). The unread posts will open in a new page in a printable and sortable format.

2. Posts can be sorted (Figure 6) by:
   a. Author’s Last Name
   b. Author’s First Name
   c. Subject
   d. Date of Last Post
e. Thread Order

3. Order can be set to:
   a. Descending (chronological order) (Figure 7)
   b. Ascending (Newest post first)

4. When opening posts this way, they will not be automatically marked as read. To do this individually select which posts you want to mark as read by clicking in the boxes to the left of the post. Alternatively, select all the posts by clicking on the Select: All link (Figure 8)
5. Select the **Mark** button and click on **Read** (Figure 9). Then click on the OK link at the bottom of the page or return back to the forum using the breadcrumbs at the top of the page.

![Figure 9 – Marking a post as Read](image)

**Creating a Discussions Thread**

To create a Thread on the Discussions Board follow these steps:

1. On the Course Menu, click **Discussions**.
2. Click the title of the discussion forum in which you wish to post the thread.
3. Click the **Create Thread** button (Figure 10).

![Figure 10 – The Create Thread button](image)

4. The **Create Thread** form is displayed (Figure 11). In Part 2 of this form, enter a **Subject** title for the message and then type the message in the main **Message** box.
5. Formatting options are available above the main message field. Click the **Show More** button (Figure 12) on the right hand end of this toolbar to see further formatting options.

![Figure 12 – The Show More button](image)

6. Further formatting options are then displayed in an expanded formatting toolbar (Figure 13).

![Figure 13 - The Expanded Formatting Toolbar](image)

7. Thread postings may also have attachments added. In Part 3 of the **Create Thread** form, click the **Browse My Computer** button to browse and find a file to be attached (Figure 14).

![Figure 14 - Adding an attachment](image)
8. An Open window opens. Navigate to find the file to be attached and select it. (Figure 15) shows an example of this.

![Figure 15 - Selecting a file to be attached](image)

9. Click Open. The file is attached to the thread posting and this is displayed in Part 3 of the Create Thread form (Figure 16). The file’s display title may be edited by overtyping the default text (the filename) in the Name of link to file field. If the incorrect file has been attached, click the Do not attach button to remove the attachment prior to posting.

![Figure 16 - An attached file is listed](image)

10. In Part 4 of the Create Thread form, if a draft of the message needs to be saved, click the Save Draft button (Figure 17).

11. Otherwise, click the Submit button to add the thread posting to the relevant Forum in the Discussions Tool (Figure 17).
4. Submit

Click Save to save a draft of this message. Click Submit to submit the post. Click Cancel to quit.

Figure 17 - The Submit button

Replying to a posting in a Discussions Thread

To reply to a posting in a thread in the Discussions Tool follow these steps:

1. On the Course Menu, click Discussions.
2. Click the title of the discussion forum in which the message to which you wish to reply resides.
3. Click the subject title of the thread. The message is displayed.
4. Click the Reply button (Figure ).

Figure 18 - The Reply button

5. Type the text of the reply in the Message field.
6. Click the Submit button.

Collecting Postings for Printing

The easiest way to print multiple postings in the Discussions Tool is to ‘collect’ threads or postings onto the same page and then print them. To do this, follow these steps:

1. On the Course Menu, click Discussions.
2. Click the title of the discussion forum in which the posts you wish to print reside.
3. To print all messages within a thread select the check boxes alongside the threads to be collected then click on the Collect button. (Figure 19)

Figure 19 - Collecting threads
4. You can also collect and print selected messages within a thread. Enter the relevant thread and click the check boxes alongside the individual postings to be collected for printing. Unfortunately, it’s not possible to collect, for example, the entirety of one thread and selected message from another thread in the same print operation. This would have to be broken up into two printing operations. From the **Message Actions** menu select **Collect**.

![Collection](image)

5. The **Collection** page is displayed. Click the **Print Preview** button (Figure 20) to open a **Print Preview** window.

6. Click **Print** in this **Print Preview** window to print in the usual way.

### Anonymous Posting

Your course instructor may have set up a forum in the Discussion Board to allow anonymous posts. This means that when you post a message your name won’t appear, instead the Author of the post will be ‘Anonymous’.

1. Click on the title of the forum allowing anonymous posts to enter that forum.
2. Click on the **Create Thread** button to create a new thread.
3. Enter a **Subject** title for the message and then type the message in the main **Message** box as normal.
4. To ensure that the posting is anonymous you need to click to select the Post Message as Anonymous option (figure 21).

5. Click on the Submit button to post your anonymous message.

### How to Save Posts as Draft and Submit Later

The Save Draft function is available if you need to return to your post at a later time. This function saves your comments and files on the page.

When you finish your post, you must click Submit to publish the thread in the forum.

### Saving a Post as Draft

1. On the Course Menu, click Discussions.
2. On the Discussion Board page, click the name of the forum.
3. On the Forum page, click Create Thread.
4. Enter a Subject title for the message and then type the message in the main Message box.
5. Click Save Draft (figure 22) to store a draft of the post and continue working later.
Submitting a Draft Post

1. Return to the Forum page. On the Forum page, point to Display to access the drop-down list and select Drafts Only to view the saved post (figure 23).

![Drafts Only](image)

Figure 23 - Selecting Drafts Only from the Display menu

2. On the Thread column, click the name of the draft post to open the post.
3. Place your cursor over the message in your post to show the Edit button (figure 24).
4. Click on the Edit button.
5. On the Edit Post page, make the necessary changes in your post. You can use the Text Editor functions to format the text and add files, images, external links, multimedia, and Mashups.
6. Click Submit.

![Edit Button](image)

Figure 24 - Showing the Edit button