**Faculty Tutorial: Use Groups in Blackboard**

**Purpose:** To show instructors how to use groups in Blackboard, with a focus on group discussions.

For more information, [learn more about Groups on Blackboard Help](#).

This tutorial includes three primary parts:

- Part 1: Create a Group Set
- Part 2: Link to a Group Set Within a Module
- Part 3: Add Content to a Group Discussion Board

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**Part 1: Create a Group Set**

1. **Start by setting up your Groups. From the Control Panel, click Users and Groups > Groups.**

![Control Panel](image)

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2. To divide your class into a number of groups, you first create a Group Set. Hover over Create > Group Set and click **Random Enroll**.
   a. You can manually enroll students if you prefer.

3. On the Create Group Set page, name the group set (e.g., “Module 1”).
   a. When Blackboard creates the Group Set, the name of each group is the Group Name and a number (e.g., “Module 1”: 1, “Module 1: 2”, and so on).
4. Keep the default selection so the “Group is visible to students.”
5. Under Tool Availability:
   a. For Discussion Boards, decide whether to allow students to create a new forum in the group discussion board.
   b. For Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, decide whether to allow anyone in the group to create new video sessions.
   c. Uncheck any tool you don’t plan to have them use in the course as a group (e.g., blogs, journals, etc.). This simplifies the student experience.
6. For Membership, decide which option fits your course needs.
   a. Note: This screenshot is for random group enrollment.
   b. Tip: Create one extra group for testing purposes.
7. Click Submit to proceed.
8. Blackboard creates the number of desired groups with the built-in tools selected and sets up an “All Groups” page.
   a. The “All Groups” tab at the top is white to show it is the active page.
   b. As noted earlier, when Blackboard creates the Group Set, the Name of each group will be Module 1: 1, Module 1: 2, and so on.

9. **Student View:** Students enrolled in Group 1 will see this in the bottom-left of their course menu.
   a. Important: You will NOT see this in instructor view.

10. **Student View:** Clicking Module 1: 1 opens the tools that were selected for the Group Set. The next step relates to the Discussion Board tool.
11. **Student View:** The Discussion Board shows all available Forums available to users enrolled in the group. In this example, there is just one forum, Module 1: 1 (the Module 1 forum for Group 1).

12. **Student View:** When students click the link for the **Module 1: 1** forum, this page displays. Students click **Create Thread** or reply to existing threads.

For more information on Creating Groups, refer to Blackboard Help. The next part shows how to link to the Group Discussion Boards.
Part 2: Link to a Group Set Within a Module

1. From within any module, click **Tools** from the options at the top and then select **Groups**.

![Module 1 screenshot](image1.png)

2. The “Create Link: Group” page displays.
   a. Change from the default selection to the “Link to a Group or Group Set” option.
   b. Select the appropriate Group Set (Module 1: in this example).
   c. Click **Next**.

![Create Link: Group](image2.png)
3. This link will open the Group Set page you created.
   a. **Student View**: Because students will only see their assigned group, we recommend keeping this content instructional in nature.
   b. Keep the name relatively general. Examples:
      i. Module 1: Small Groups for Discussion
      ii. Module 1 Discussion Groups
   c. Change color to blue (#004477).

*Continued on next page*
4. Type the instructions for students in the text box.
   a. Under Options, select Yes to “Track Number of Views.”
   b. Click Submit to proceed.

5. The group discussion now displays within the module.
   a. To edit this content within the module, click the arrow to the right of the title and select Edit.
6. When you click the newly created Group link, you will see a page that summarizes the Groups.

Module 1: Small Groups for Discussion

Enabled: Review, Statistics Tracking

Discussion Overview

1. A discussion convener will be assigned. This person will be responsible for providing the initial posting to the question(s) provided in the discussion.
2. Start participating in the team discussion by reviewing the convener’s initial posts.
3. Then, all group members, including the convener, should provide two responses. In this way, we can ensure a rich and vibrant discussion. Discussion posts and responses should be well-developed, complete thoughts supported by literature or real-life examples. Please refrain from simple responses such as, “I agree” or “Good point.” Use this time to explore and develop your own beliefs regarding leadership.

Discussion Instructions

1. Click the Small Groups for Discussion header above to open your assigned group page.
2. Under the Group Tools section, click Group Discussion Board, and then select the Module 2 Discussion forum.
3. Click Create Thread to start your post.

If you have questions, please post them to the Q&A Forum.

7. As the instructor, click each link (i.e., Module 1: #) to open the Group page for each group.
   a. Student View: Students will only see the homepage for their assigned group.
8. **Student View:** When students click the link, their Group Homepage displays.
   
a. Students have another option to access their groups, described in the next step.

   **Module 1: Small Groups for Discussion**

   Enabled: Review, Statistics Tracking

   **Discussion Overview**

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   **Discussion Instructions**

   1. Click the Small Groups for Discussion header above to open your assigned group page.
   2. Under the Group Tools section, click **Group Discussion Board**, and then select the **Module 2 Discussion** forum.
   3. Click **Create Thread** to start your post.

   If you have questions, please post them to the Q&A Forum.

   b. This is the Module 1 page for Group 1.
   c. Students in Group 1 click the **Group Discussion Board** link under Group Tools to open the Module 1: 1 Discussion Board, which is for their group only.
   d. The instructor experience is the same from this page.
9. **Student View:** Students can directly access the Group Discussion Board through the My Groups link located in the lower left portion of the menu.
   
a. Students have another option to access their groups, described in the previous step.

   Students in Group 1 click the **Group Discussion Board** link under Group Tools to open the Module 1: 1 Discussion Board, which is for their group only.

For more information on Managing Groups, refer to Blackboard Help. The next part shows how to add content to the Group Discussion Boards.
Part 3: Add Content to a Group Discussion Board

This portion of the tutorial assumes you have created the Group discussion link on the module page (see Part 2 in this tutorial for more information).

1. To make changes and add content to the Group Discussion Boards, return to Groups via Control Panel. Click Users and Groups > Groups.
2. The All Groups page displays. This shows all Groups in each Group Set.
   a. In this example, a Group Set was created for Module 1 and Module 2. Each Group Set has four groups.
   b. The Group names display in the “Name” column.
   c. Reminder: Students won’t ever see this page.

3. To create a Module 1 Discussion Board for Group 1, click **Module 1: 1**.
   a. Note: After you finalize the Module 1 group discussion for Group 1, you will need to copy/paste the instructions from Group 1 to each of the other Groups.
4. The page for group Module 1: 1 displays. This page shows you the Group Properties, Group Members, and Group Tools selected on the Tool Availability screen.
   a. Under Group Tools, click **Group Discussion Board**.

5. The Discussion Board for Group 1 displays.
   a. There is one discussion board per group; each board can have multiple discussion forums.
   b. Click **Create Forum** to create a discussion forum for Group 1.
6. On the Create Forum page:
   a. Name the discussion forum, such as the module name or the discussion topic (e.g., “Module 1 Discussion”). Use the same naming convention for each group.
   b. Type the instructions or prompt for the discussion in the description. “Placeholder for instructions” is used in this case for demonstration purposes.
   c. Remember to copy these instructions to use for the remaining groups.

7. Update the Forum Settings to match your requirements.
   a. We recommend you keep the forum available. You can edit the forum settings to make it unavailable at any time.
8. For Forum Settings, the only option you typically would change is if you are grading the forum.

9. On the lower half of the Forum Settings, consider whether to allow file attachments.
   a. If a student uploads a document instead of typing in the forum, the gets rather clunky. However, there are times when attachments are justified.

10. Click **Submit** to finish creating the forum.
11. The Discussion Board for Group 1 displays.
   a. The new forum “Module 1 Discussion” now displays in the discussion board for Group 1.
   b. The instructions for the Module 1 Discussion forum are visible under the Description heading for the new forum.

Note: Blackboard auto-generates a discussion forum for the group (Forum Module 1: 1). You may use this forum if you choose, but this tutorial shows you how to add new forums to the Discussion Board.

12. To update the instructions, click the arrow to the right of “Module 1 Discussion” and click Edit.
   a. Type the instructions in the text box.
   b. Select Yes option to “Track Number of Views.”
   c. Click Submit to proceed.
13. The discussion forum description (instructions) displays in two places for both instructors and students.
   a. First, the instructions can be found on the Discussion Board page for Group 1.
   b. Second, when a user clicks to Create Thread or Reply to a thread, the description ("instructions") will display.
Congratulations! Now you know the basics of how to set up and use Group discussion boards and forums in Blackboard.

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For further help with Blackboard and other technical assistance, visit the Knowledge Base.
For general technical issues, contact Information Technology Services.