This Quick Guide gives the eLearning team’s recommendations on creating an online discussion activity in Blackboard.

Guides on other aspects of creating and moderating online discussion activities are available at [www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/](http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/)

1. Adding an Online Discussion Board to the module menu

- Select the **Add Menu Item** icon above the module menu.
- Select **Tool Link**.
- Type a **Name** for the link.
- From the **Type** drop-down menu, select **Discussion Board**.
- Tick the **Available to Users** check box or not.
- Select **Submit**.

2. Add a Discussion Forum to a Discussion Board

- Open the discussion board by clicking on the link you just created on the module menu.
- Click on the **Create Forum** button to create a link to the Discussion forum.
- Give the forum a **name** e.g. Activity 1.
- Write a **description** for the activity. Include clear instructions on what is expected from the students. How often do they need to contribute? And how long should their posting be? If this is an assessment let the students know how it will be graded etc.
- Set the forum availability to **Yes/No** or set **Date and time restrictions**.
- Select **Standard View**.
- If this activity is for assessment decide on **grading options** and **points** possible.
- For graded activities set a **Due Date**. You can also add a **Rubric** and decide if the rubric will be displayed to the students.
- Decide after what number of posts are required before they will appear in the **Needs Grading** queue.
- Under **Create and Edit** — you might like to **Allow Members to Create New Threads** and **Allow File Attachments**. Look at the other options and make your selection based on the activity you are creating.
- When you are ready click on **Submit**.

3. Creating a Discussion Thread – This is your activity question

- Open the discussion board by clicking on the link you created on the module menu.
- Next open the forum you created.
- From the next screen choose **Create Thread**.
- On the next screen enter a **Subject Title** for the thread.
- In the message box post the task/question then click **Submit**.

**NOTE:** Set a meaningful task so the students will see the benefits of engaging. Tasks/questions should be open-ended.

4. Creating a direct link from a Content area to a Forum

- To link from a **Content Area** (e.g. the Week 1 folder) to a forum activity select the content area from the module menu.
- From the **Tools** drop-down menu select **Discussion Board**.
- Check the radio button **Select a Discussion Board Forum**.
- Select the forum you created from the list or **Create a New Forum** (follow instruction in 2 for creating).

5. The Next Step – Running a successful online discussion activity

Visit [http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/](http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/) for the next Quick Guide on running an online discussion.