

Ed Discussion Support & FAQs

Ed Discussion is a question-and-answer discussion board accessed through a Blackboard course or through SSO by following the URL <https://edstem.org/us/>.

It facilitates collaborative interaction among students and is designed to model face-to-face group discussions allowing for the creation of complex questions and answers.

Questions can be posed by both students and instructors, and answers can generate additional follow-up questions and answers, adding clarity and depth to the original post. Instructors have the ability to endorse or reply to student answers increasing the appetite for student collaboration.

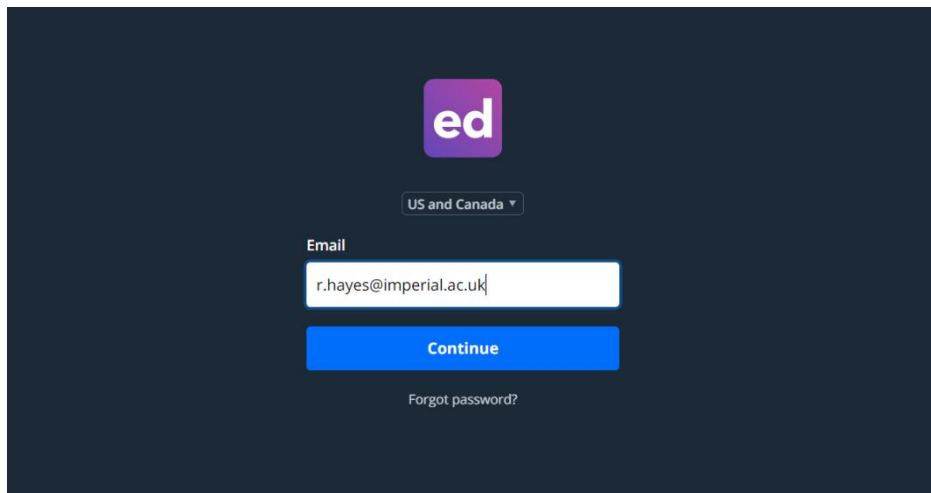
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Logging in to Ed Discussion (student and staff)

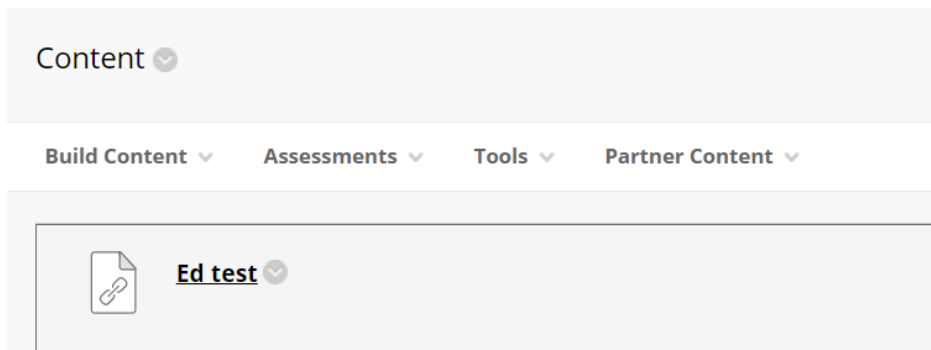
How to login via SSO

To login to Ed Discussion via SSO, navigate to <https://edstem.org/> and select 'US & Canada' from the dropdown and enter your full Imperial email address. This must be the full email address, not your username or an alias of your Imperial email address.



How to login to Ed Discussion via LTI

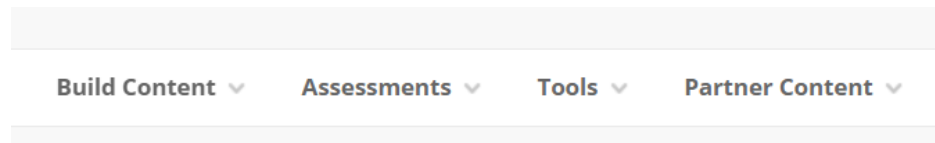
To login to Ed Discussion via LTI, navigate to the relevant Blackboard course and select the Ed Discussion LTI link.



The LTI link should appear as above, but the name of the link may vary based on the decision of the course creator. Once selected, Ed Discussion will open in a new window. Clicking on the link will enrol first time users on to the discussion board. User's role will be determined to match that of the one they have in Blackboard. (Students will be enrolled as students; instructors, markers, and course admin will be enrolled as Instructors.)

How to install Ed Discussion on a Blackboard course.

To install Ed Discussion on a Blackboard course, navigate to the relevant course, ensure edit mode is on and select Ed from the 'Tools' dropdown as displayed below.




Once the LTI has been selected there will be an option to name the LTI link, along with availability settings. Any changes made to Ed Discussion will need to be configured in the LTI itself rather than in Blackboard.

Configuring General Settings

To begin configuring an Ed Discussion board, follow the login information above to navigate to the correct Ed Discussion board. When you have opened the relevant board select the cog in the top right hand corner of the screen. From here you will be able to fully configure your course.

Setting the board name, course code and term.

When you create an Ed Discussion Board through the Blackboard LTI, the name of the board, course code and term will be set automatically and determined by the naming conventions of the Blackboard course.

A screenshot of the Ed Discussion configuration screen. On the left is a sidebar with three tabs: 'General' (selected), 'Discussion', and 'Advanced'. The main content area has a title 'TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2021 - Ed discusssion test' and a subtitle '2021, SEMESTER 1'. A blue 'Save' button is in the top right. Below the title is a 'Course' section with four input fields: 'Code' (TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2021), 'Name' (Ed discusssion test), 'Year' (2021), and 'Session' (Semester 1).

The above screenshot displays what can be seen when editing the code, name, year, and session. The same screen will appear for both. In both the LTI and SSO versions of Ed Discussion this section is fully customisable. The name and code can be modified without breaking the LTI link.

Adding users to a discussion board

There are a couple of ways to add users to a discussion board, including accessing via Bb course, users being manually uploaded via CSV or enabling a join link that can be emailed to users.

Within the general settings page of each Ed Discussion Board there is an option to enable a join link as seen below.

TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2021 – Ed discusssion Test

2021, SEMESTER 1

Save

Join Link

You can automatically add all students to this course with the **Sync with LMS** button at the bottom of this page. You should *not* enable the Join Link unless you have a specific reason to.

Allow students to self sign up to the course by visiting the join link below.

Enable (not recommended)

Features

Resources

Discussion

Default page

Discussion ↕

It is not recommended to enable a join link, as enrolment to the course is then not regulated.

Adding users to an SSO accessed discussion board.

To add users via CSV, users full names and email addresses will need to be entered into CSV format and then pasted into the tool as shown below (this again can be found in the general settings of each course)

Invite Users

Enter the full name and email address of each user in CSV format. You can also copy and paste user data from Excel.

Role

Unenroll existing students before importing

Example: John Appleseed, john1234@example.edu, Tutorial 1A;Tutorial 1B (optional, semicolon-delimited)

There is the option to select a single role for a group of users being added to the course. Currently there is only the option to upload users sharing the same role at any one time, so you will not be able to upload a CSV with a mix of students and instructors. If you are uploading a set of students and instructors, these will need to be done separate to each other.

To change a user's role in course you can edit their role in the list of existing users as shown below:

Users

2 users (1 student) are enrolled in this course. All users have accepted their invitation.

Click a cell to edit its value. Press **ENTER** or click away to save the changes, or **ESC** to cancel.

Search

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Email	Role ^	Tutorial	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rachael Hayes	r.hayes@imperial.ac.uk	Admin (Instructor)		Enrolled ↕
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elearn One	elearn1@imperial.ac.uk	Student		Enrolled ↕

To edit a user's role in the course, simply select their role in the 'Role' column and a drop down of all available roles will appear. Current available roles include:

- Student
- Mentor
- Tutor
- Staff (TA)
- Admin (Instructor)

Role names can be changed and information on how to do this can be found further down the page under Advanced Settings.

	Admin	Staff	Tutor	Mentor	Student
Default badge					
Manage the course admin page	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Add/remove/modify users	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Change roles	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Access to analytics	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Reveal anonymous	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Create staff-only comments	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Make announcements	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Create a megathread	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Pin threads	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Endorse threads	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Write an @mention	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Can be tagged in an @mention	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Edit/delete any threads/comments	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Edit the category of any thread	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Lock a thread	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Make a private thread public	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Decline thread	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
See all private threads	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
See the user's tutorial	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Accept answer on any thread	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Accept answer on their own thread	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create private threads	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edit/delete own threads/comments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Adding user via the Blackboard LTI accessed discussion board

When any user enrolled on a Blackboard course accesses the Ed Discussion LTI link, they will automatically be enrolled on to the Ed Discussion board. Their role will be allocated based on their role within the Blackboard course.

Alternatively there is an additional option to sync all users from Blackboard to the Ed Discussion board using the 'Sync with LMS' button. This button gives you the option to sync everyone, or to only sync students.

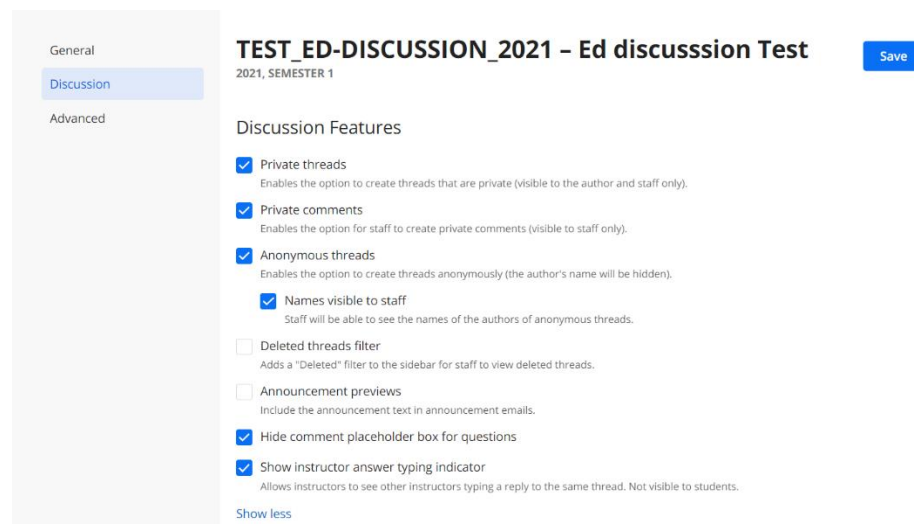
Configuring Ed Discussion Boards

REMEMBER TO SELECT SAVE AFTER MAKING ANY CHANGES.

To configure the posting settings of individual boards, from the settings cog in the righthand corner. Once the general settings page opens, then select 'Discussion' from the menu on the left.

Discussion Features

A variety of discussion features can be turned on and off using the buttons as displayed in the screenshot below:



Adding categories to a discussion board

Users can add or edit discussion board categories. This can be done by entering the category titles into the category box in Discussion settings, and subcategories can be added in the same way by using the TAB key to indent.

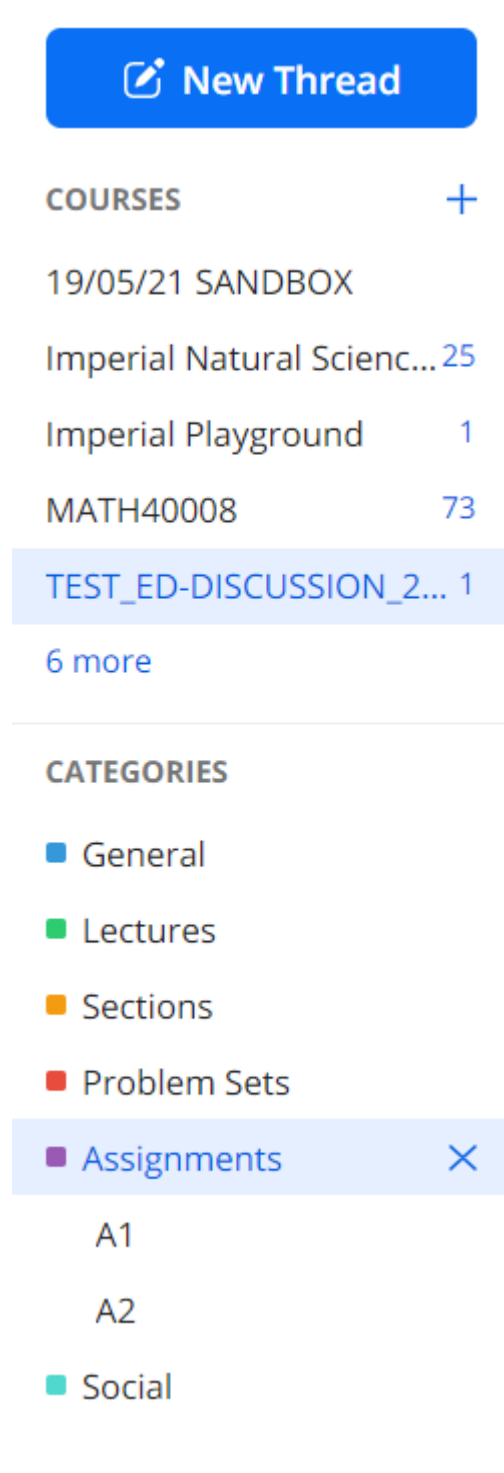
Categories

Define categories one per line and use the TAB key to indent and specify subcategories.

```
General
Lectures
Sections
Problem Sets
Assignments
  A1
  A2
Social
```

Category unselected by default
Requires the user to explicitly select a category before they can begin typing the thread content. Recommended if you are using thread templates.

There is also the option to force users to select a category before posting. Once categories have been created, they will be displayed in the discussion board as seen in the screenshot below:



The screenshot displays a user interface for creating a new thread. At the top is a blue button with a pencil icon and the text "New Thread". Below this is a section titled "COURSES" with a plus sign to its right. A list of courses follows, each with a name and a count: "19/05/21 SANDBOX", "Imperial Natural Scienc... 25", "Imperial Playground 1", "MATH40008 73", and "TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2... 1". A link for "6 more" is also present. Below the courses is a section titled "CATEGORIES". A list of categories follows, each with a colored square icon: "General" (blue), "Lectures" (green), "Sections" (orange), "Problem Sets" (red), "Assignments" (purple), and "Social" (teal). The "Assignments" category is highlighted with a blue background and has a close icon (X) to its right. Below "Assignments" are two sub-items, "A1" and "A2".

New Thread

COURSES +

19/05/21 SANDBOX

Imperial Natural Scienc... 25

Imperial Playground 1

MATH40008 73

TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2... 1

6 more

CATEGORIES

- General
- Lectures
- Sections
- Problem Sets
- Assignments X
- Social

A1

A2

Thread Templates

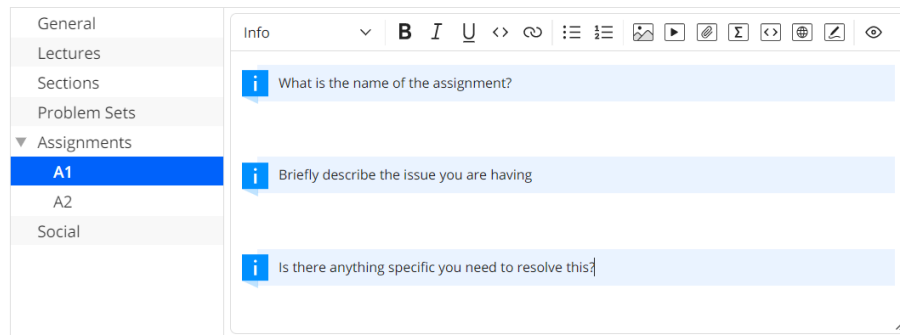
Thread templates can be added to categories or subcategories. Thread templates appear when a user posts a new thread in the category where the template is enabled.

Thread templates are completely customisable using the rich text editor, although the call outs option is particularly useful for structuring clear templates.

Thread Templates

Customise the initial content of new threads for each discussion category below.

Enabled



The screenshot displays the configuration interface for thread templates. On the left, a sidebar menu lists categories: General, Lectures, Sections, Problem Sets, and Assignments. Under the 'Assignments' category, subcategories A1, A2, and Social are visible, with A1 selected. The main area shows a rich text editor with a toolbar and three callout boxes containing template text: 'What is the name of the assignment?', 'Briefly describe the issue you are having', and 'Is there anything specific you need to resolve this?'.

Saved Replies and Moderation

Similarly to thread templates, saved replies and declined thread replies can also be added.

Save replies are fully customisable and can be used for generic feedback to save time. These can be enabled and disabled, so saved replies can be stored but the option can be disabled if there are not needed in the course.

Saved Replies

Store any frequently used replies among course staff to help speed things up.

Enabled

The screenshot shows a user interface for 'Saved Replies'. On the left, there is a list of saved replies, with 'Great work!' selected and highlighted in blue. To the right of the list is a 'Delete' button. The main area is a rich text editor for editing the selected reply. At the top of the editor is a 'Name' field containing the text 'Great work!'. Below the name field is a rich text editor toolbar with options for Paragraph, Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Link, Unlink, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Image, Video, Table, and other formatting tools. The main text area of the editor contains a single line of text: 'Great work on this!', which is highlighted in green. A small green checkmark icon is visible to the left of the text.

The moderation functions in Ed Discussion allow for a 'new threads require approval' option to be turned off and on, and also allow for standard replies to any declined threads.

Moderation

New threads require approval
New threads posted by students will be hidden from other students until it is approved by a staff member.

Decline thread template

Enter the template for a comment that you can post to the student when declining a thread.

The screenshot shows a rich text editor for creating a decline thread template. The toolbar at the top includes a dropdown menu currently showing 'Error', along with various formatting icons like Bold, Italic, Underline, Link, Unlink, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Image, Video, Table, and other tools. The main text area of the editor contains a single line of text: 'Unfortunately this post does not meet class standards. Please review what you have written and post your thread again.' This text is highlighted in a light red background, indicating an error or a specific template type.

When threads are declined, they will only be visible to instructors and the user who posted the declined thread. Declined threads will appear to the user as shown in the screenshot below.

Hello #2

Afraid your post was reviewed by an instructor and was not approved.
This thread is only visible to you, and hidden from other students.



Rachael Hayes INSTRUCTOR
now in **General**

★ STAR 👁 WATCHING 1 VIEW

This is a new thread

...

Sort by Newest ▾



TEST_ED-DISCUSSION_2021 Bot now



Unfortunately this post does not meet class standards. Please review what you have written and post your thread again.

...

The user who declined the thread will not be displayed, instead the posted will be listed as 'TITLE_OF_THE_DISCUSSION_BOARD Bot'.

Configuring Code within the Discussion Board

Ed Discussion used runnable code in the discussion boards. This can be customised to provide the most relevant code for the course being taught.

In the screenshot below 'Snippet Languages' allows for programming languages to be entered, if left blank then all languages will be available. There is also the option to set a default snippet language, as well as to select which languages can be syntax highlighted. Once these customisations are put in place, the user should select 'save' at the top of the screen.

Code

Snippet Languages

Choose which languages are available inside snippets, separated by commas, or leave blank for all languages.

Default Snippet Language

Choose which language will be selected by default for a snippet.

(No default) ▾

Highlightable Languages

Automatically syntax highlight code paragraphs based on the selected languages.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> C/C++ | <input type="checkbox"/> Python | <input type="checkbox"/> Java | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby | <input type="checkbox"/> R |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Julia | <input type="checkbox"/> SQL | <input type="checkbox"/> JavaScript | <input type="checkbox"/> CSS | <input type="checkbox"/> HTML |

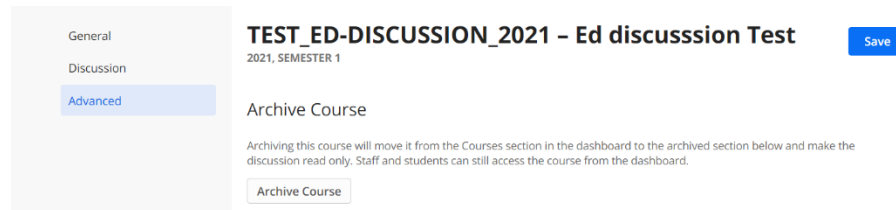
Configuring Advanced Settings

REMEMBER TO SELECT SAVE AFTER MAKING ANY CHANGES.

To configure the advanced settings of individual boards, from the settings cog in the righthand corner. Once the general settings page opens, then select 'Advanced' from the menu on the left.

Archiving a Discussion Board

Within Ed Discussion, staff have the option to archive individual courses. When discussion boards are archived, they become read only, but are still accessible to all enrolled users. Discussion boards can be un-archived at any time.



Role Labels in Discussion Boards

In each discussion board, role labels can be adjusted to be in keeping with the language used in the module. For example, Staff could be updated to Teaching Assistant.

A full list of role permissions can be found here: <https://edstem.org/help/getting-started#appendix-roles>

Role Labels

Customise how course roles are displayed. Leave blank to use the default.

Student	<input type="text"/>
Mentor	<input type="text"/>
Tutor	<input type="text"/>
Staff	<input type="text" value="TA"/>
Admin	<input type="text" value="Instructor"/>

Miscellaneous

Show user profile pictures