Using Discussions in Brightspace

You can create whole-class or group discussion areas in Brightspace.

The discussion board tool is available for you to use in all of your modules on Brightspace. Discussion boards can used to create a forum where the entire class participates. Dedicated discussion boards can also be created for student groups in the module.

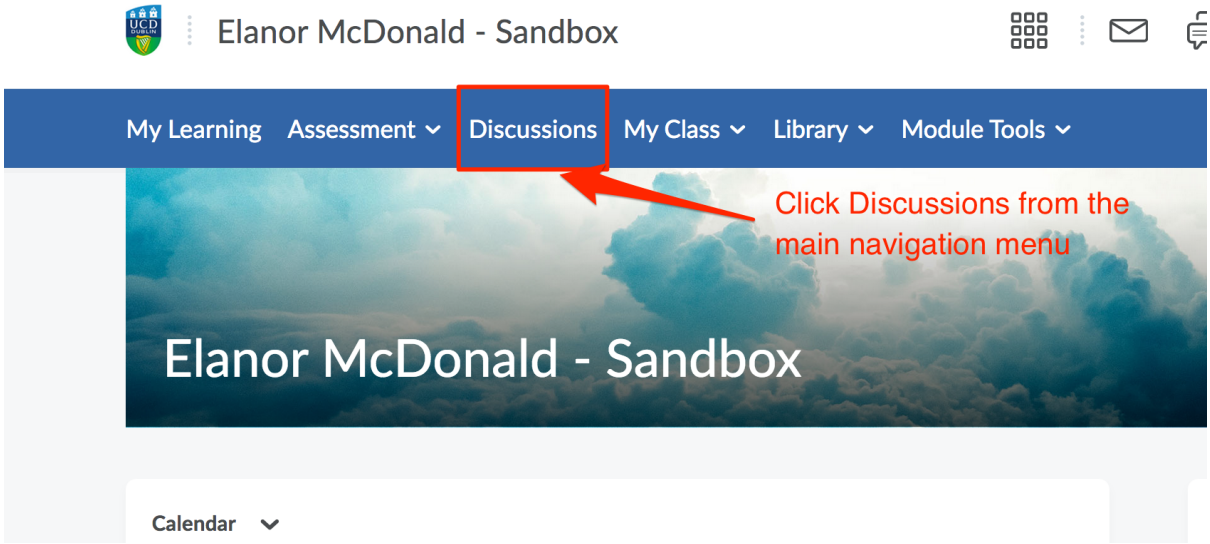
Using discussion boards in Brightspace is a useful way to:

- Engage students outside of the classroom with the module content
- Encourage student participation by providing an online space for students to share ideas and commentary about a particular subject
- Enable collaboration among student groups with the provision of a dedicated discussion board

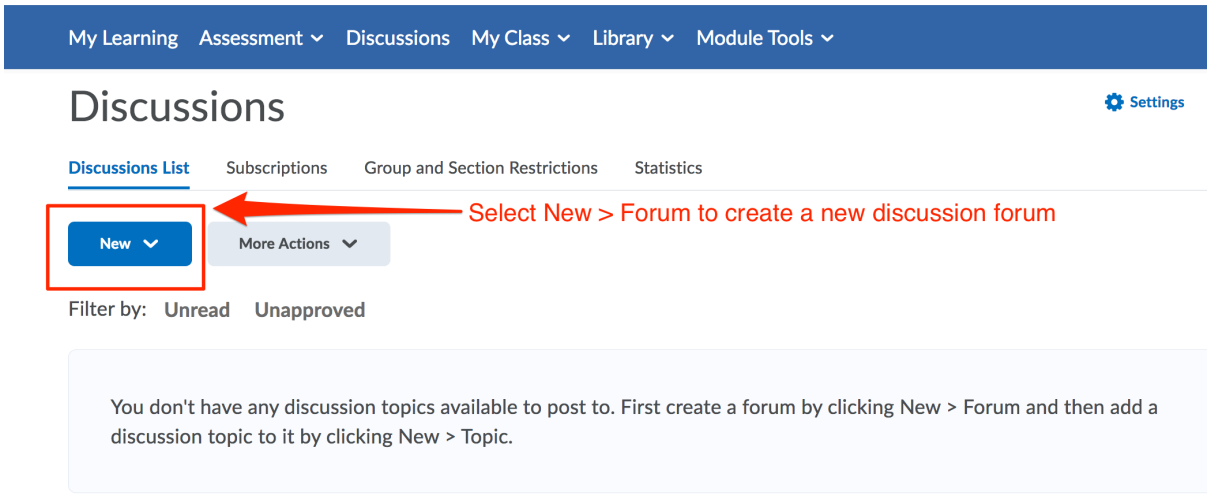
You can use the discussion tools to create discussion forums that host discussion topics. You might create a forum that will host a number of topic discussions. For example, you may wish to create a discussion forum for a particular unit in your module that you will be covering over 2 weeks of module. You could create 2 separate topics in the unit discussion forum in order to pose a specific question to the class about content covered in each week of the unit.

Whole Class Discussions

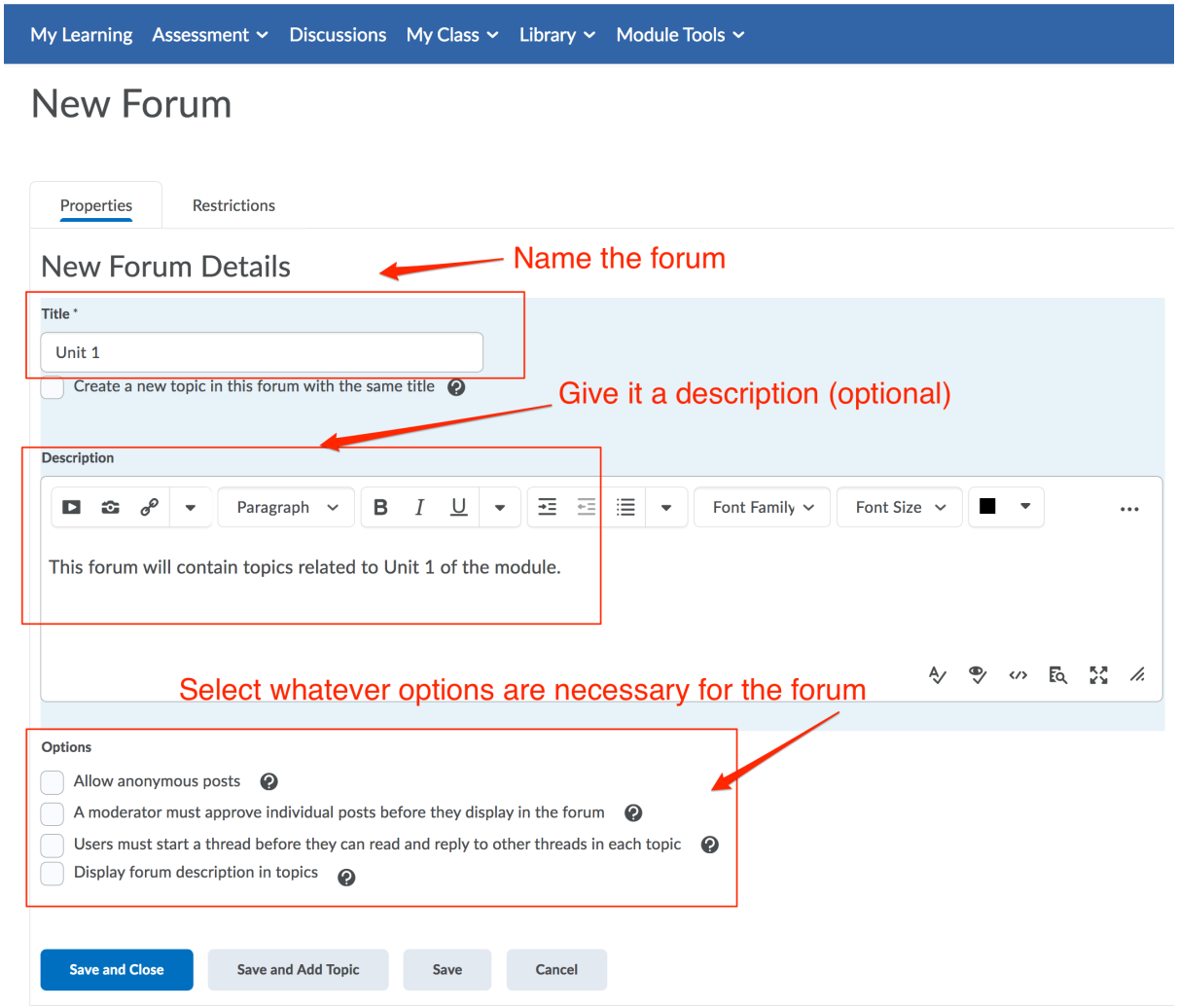
Step 1 – Navigate to the *Discussions* area, click *Discussions* from the top navigation menu.



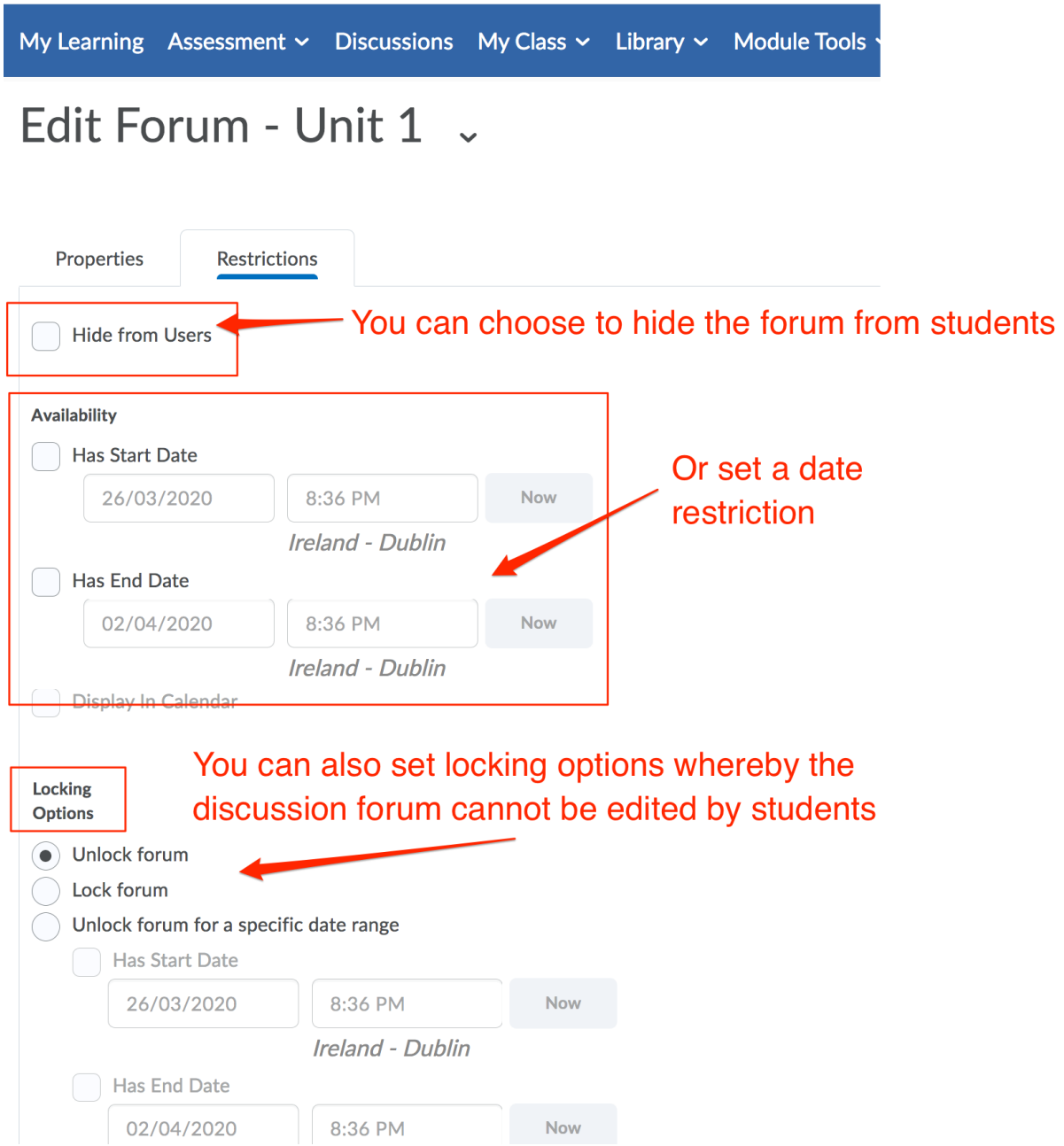
Step 2 – Select *New* and then *New Forum* on the menu.



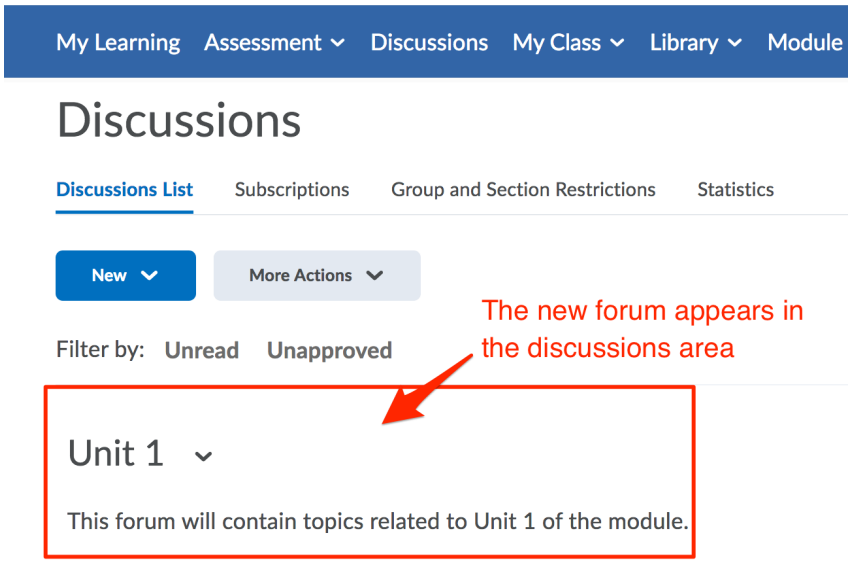
Step 3 – On the *Properties* tab, name the forum and give it a description. The description is optional but if completed will be displayed to the students. There are a number of options available at the bottom of the *Properties* tab, select as needed. It is recommended to only use the *Allow anonymous posts* option if absolutely necessary.



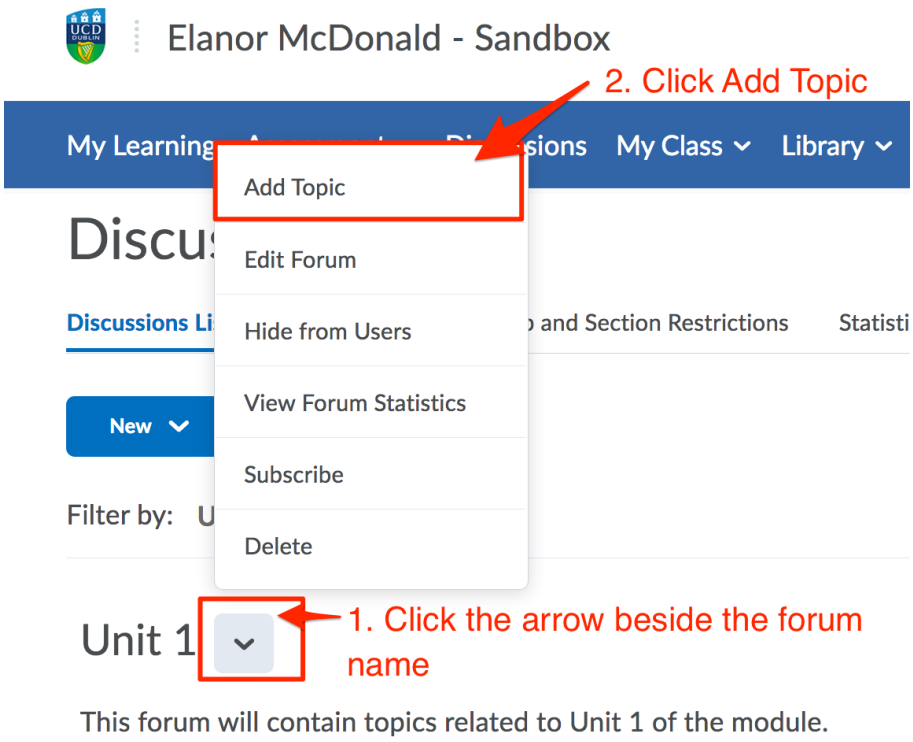
Step 4 – On the *Restrictions* tab you can choose to hide the forum from students as well as setting a release date. You can also choose to lock the forum from students, meaning they can't edit or add to the forum, or create a date range where the forum is locked or unlocked for editing. Click *Save and Close*, when you are finished setting up the forum.



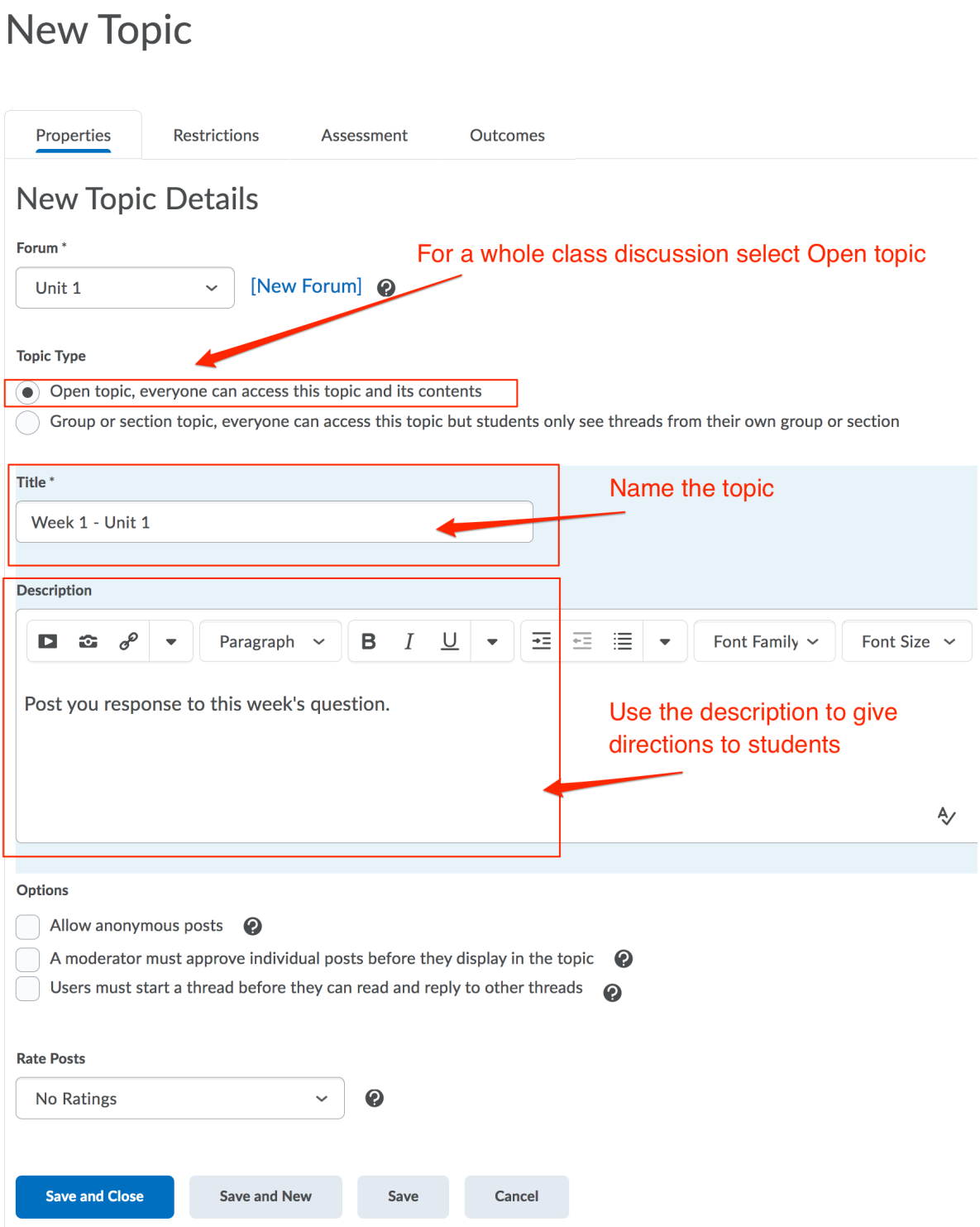
Step 5 – The new forum will appear in the *Discussions* area.



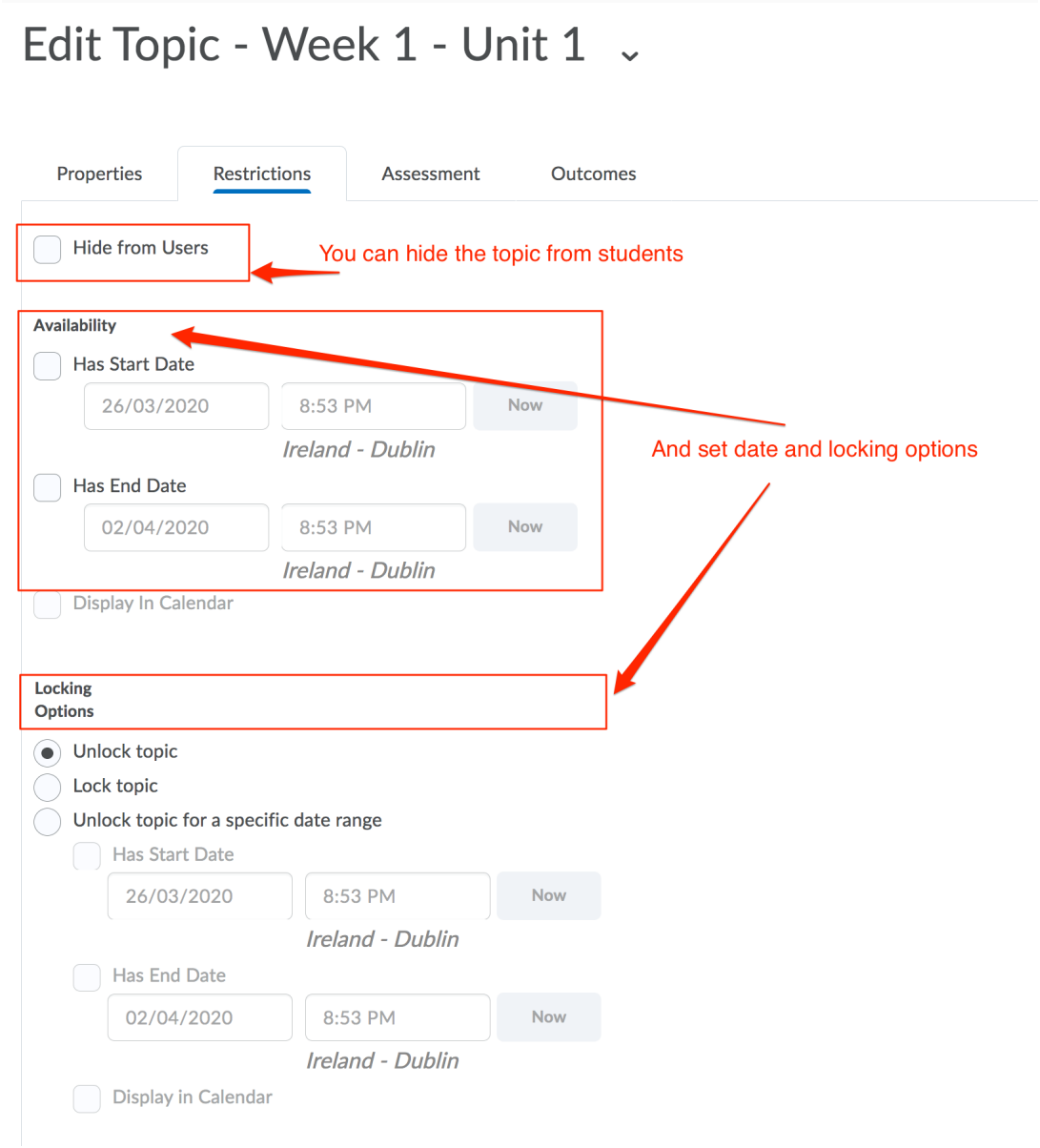
Step 6 – Create a new topic that students will post a response to by clicking the arrow beside the forum name and selecting *Add Topic*.



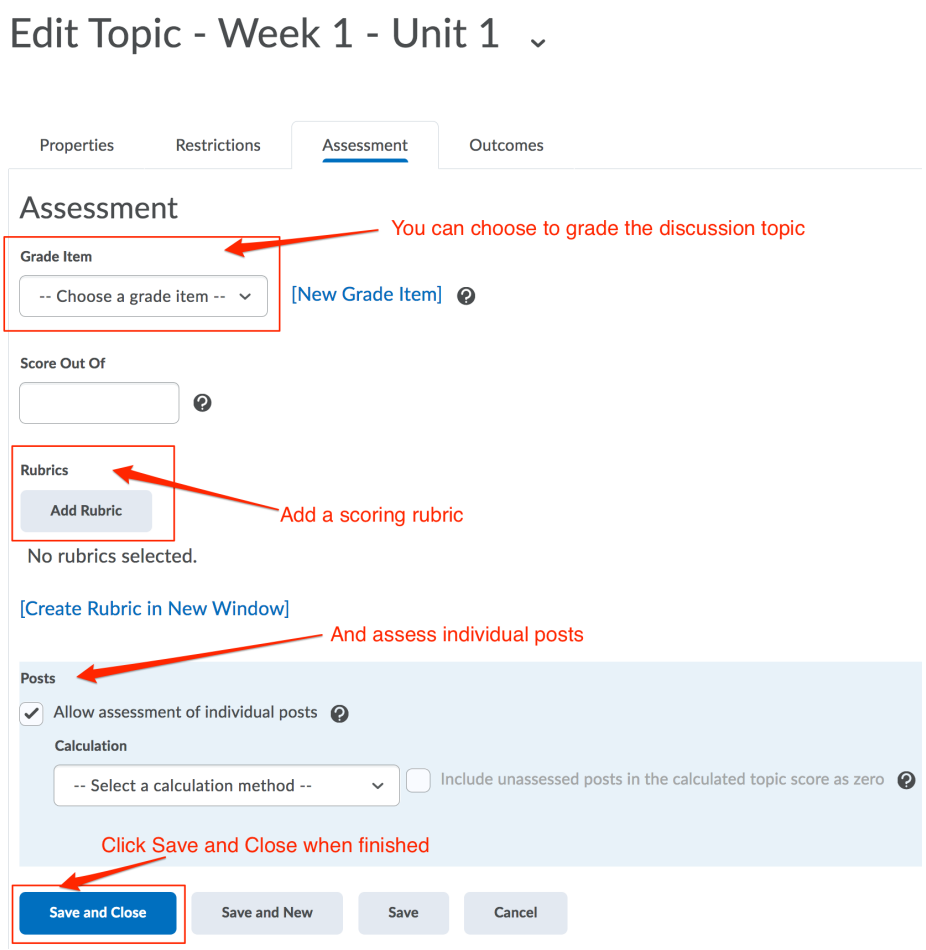
Step 7 – On the *Properties* tab, select the forum you want to add the topic to (in this case the newly created forum, Unit 1). To create a topic that the entire class can add to select, *Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents.* Name the topic and use the description to instruct students how and what they should be posting. There are additional options at the end of the *Properties* tab, select any that are appropriate.



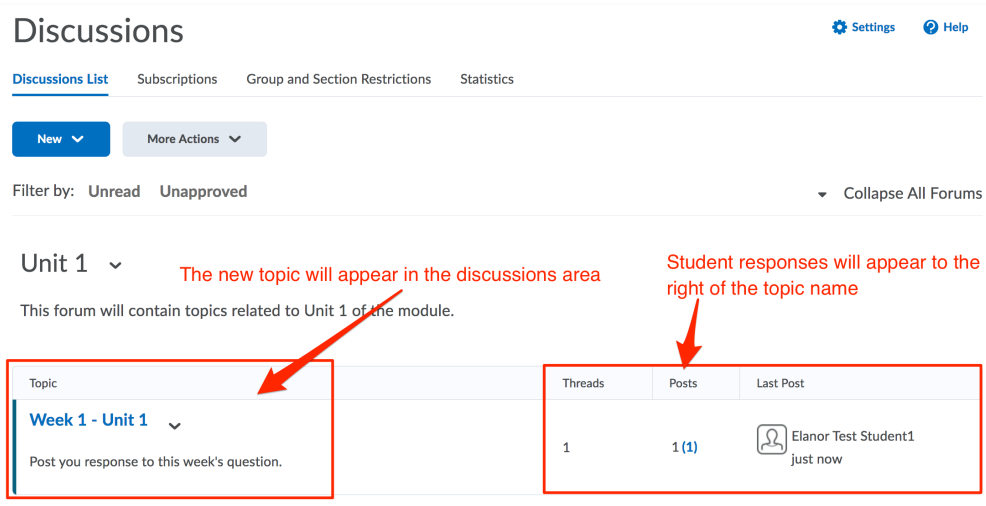
Step 8 – In the *Restrictions* tab, you can choose to hide the topic and set date restrictions as well as setting locking options also.



Step 9 – In the *Assessment* tab you can choose to add a grade item for the discussion topic, meaning you can score the topic in the grades area of the module. You can add a rubric for marking. And can also enable the option to assess individual posts. Click *Save and Close* when finished.



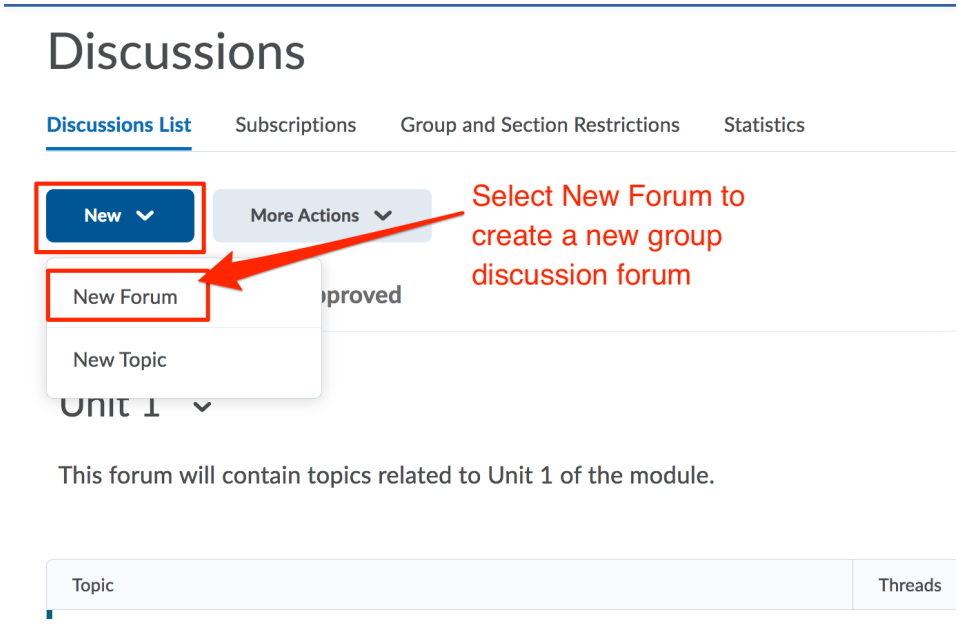
Step 10 – The new topic will appear in the *Discussions* area with student responses displayed to the right of the topic name.



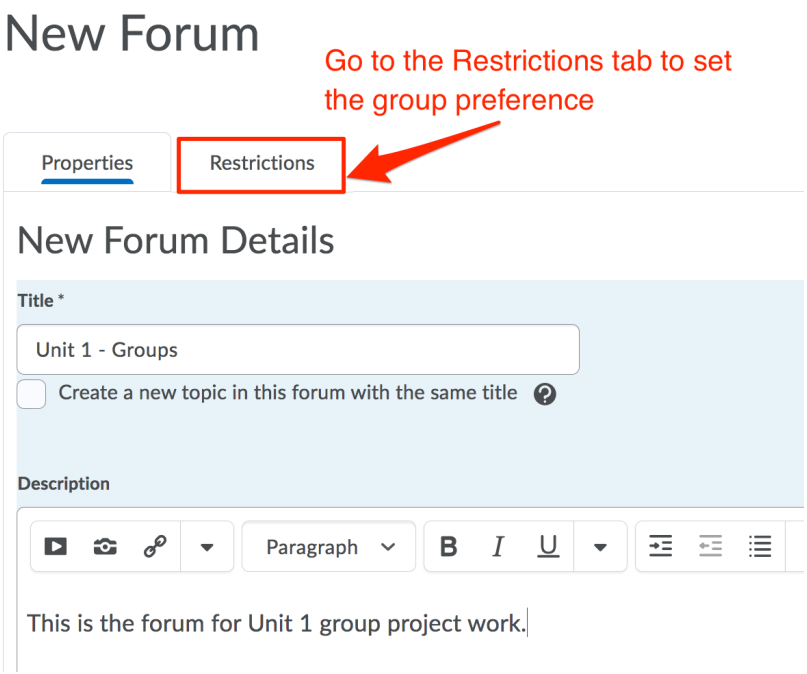
Group Discussions

It is possible to create forums and topics that are accessible only by groups in the module. Note, you will need to have groups created in the module before proceeding to the below steps.

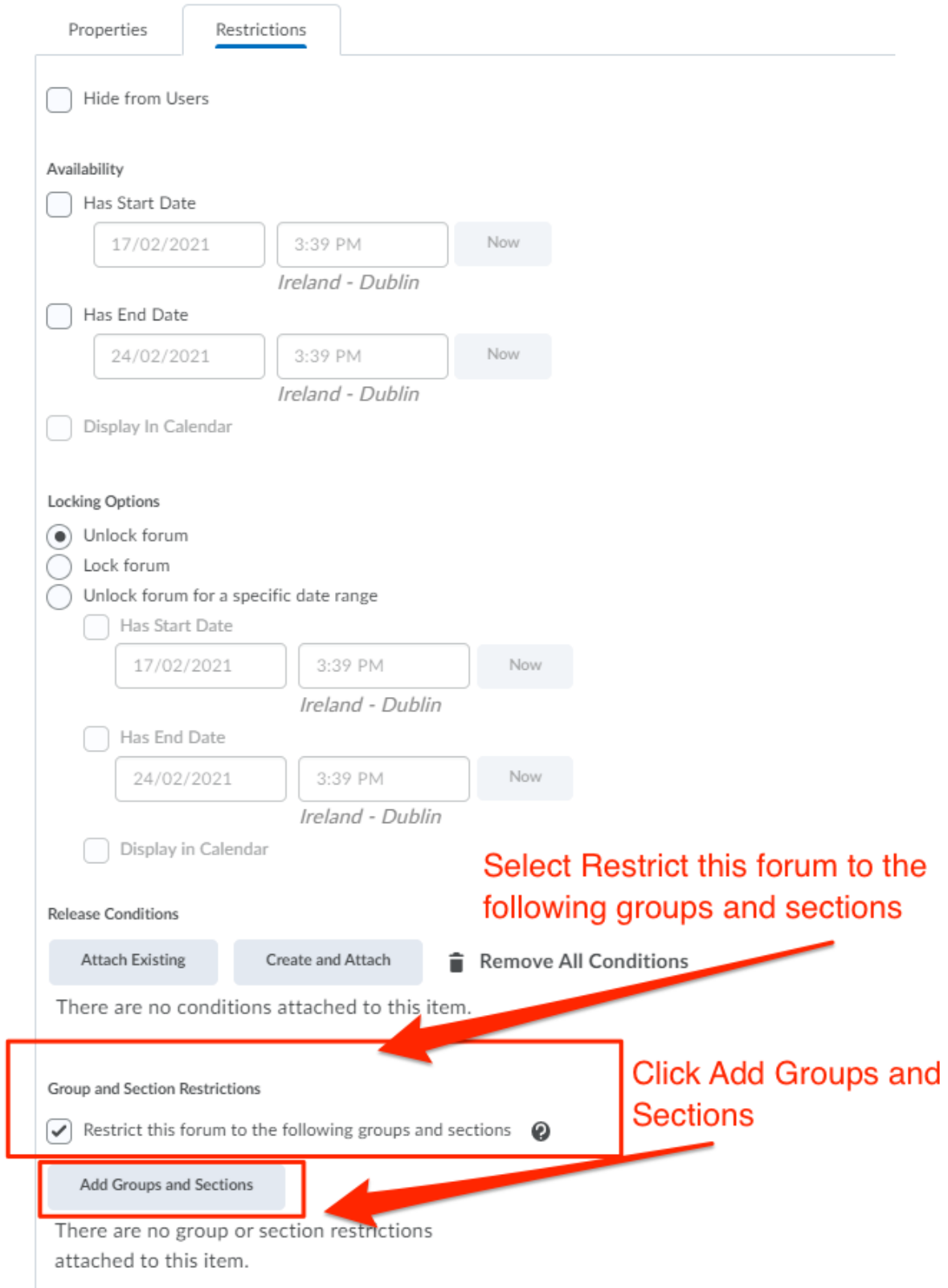
Step 1 – To create a new group forum go to the *Discussions* area and select *New* and then *New Forum* from the drop down menu.



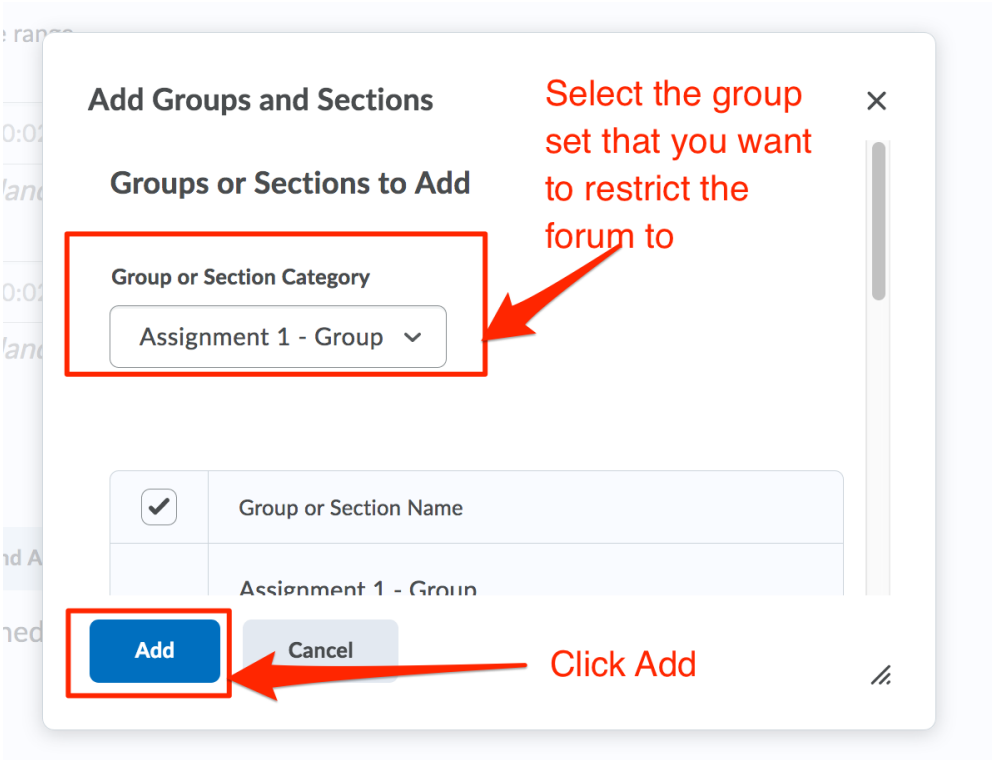
Step 2 – As before give the forum a title, description etc and then navigate to the *Restrictions* tab



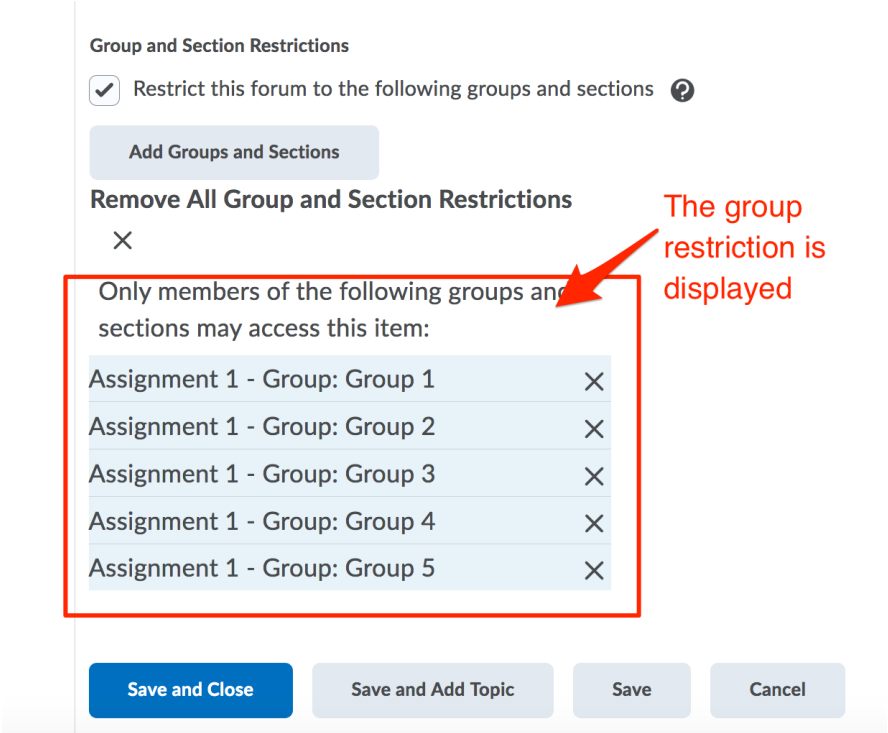
Step 3 – On the *Restrictions* tab, select *Restrict this forum to the following groups and sections.* And then click *Add Groups and Sections.*



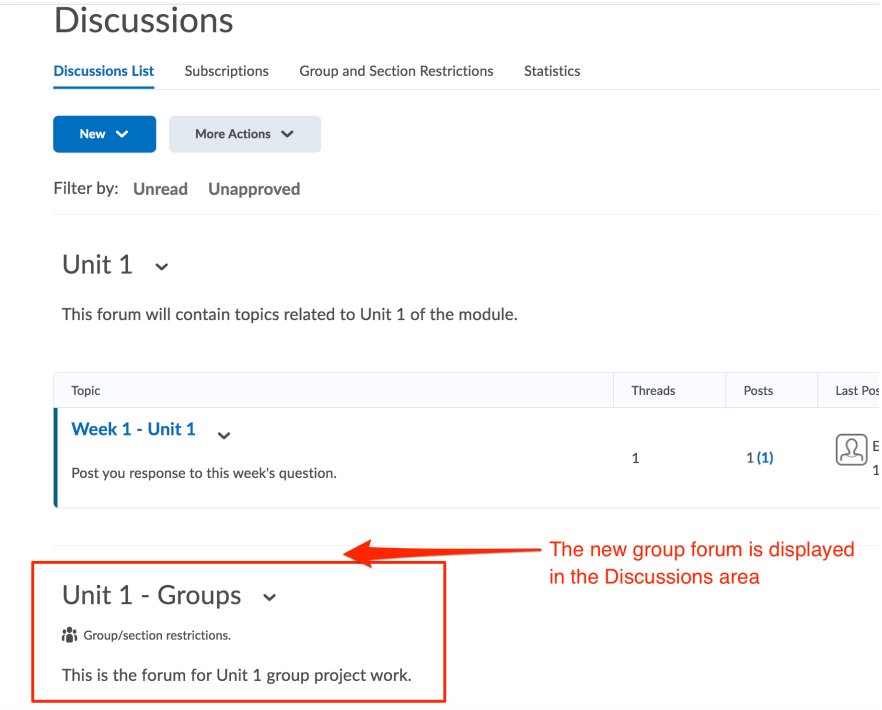
Step 4 – Select the group set that you want to restrict the forum to and then click *Add*.



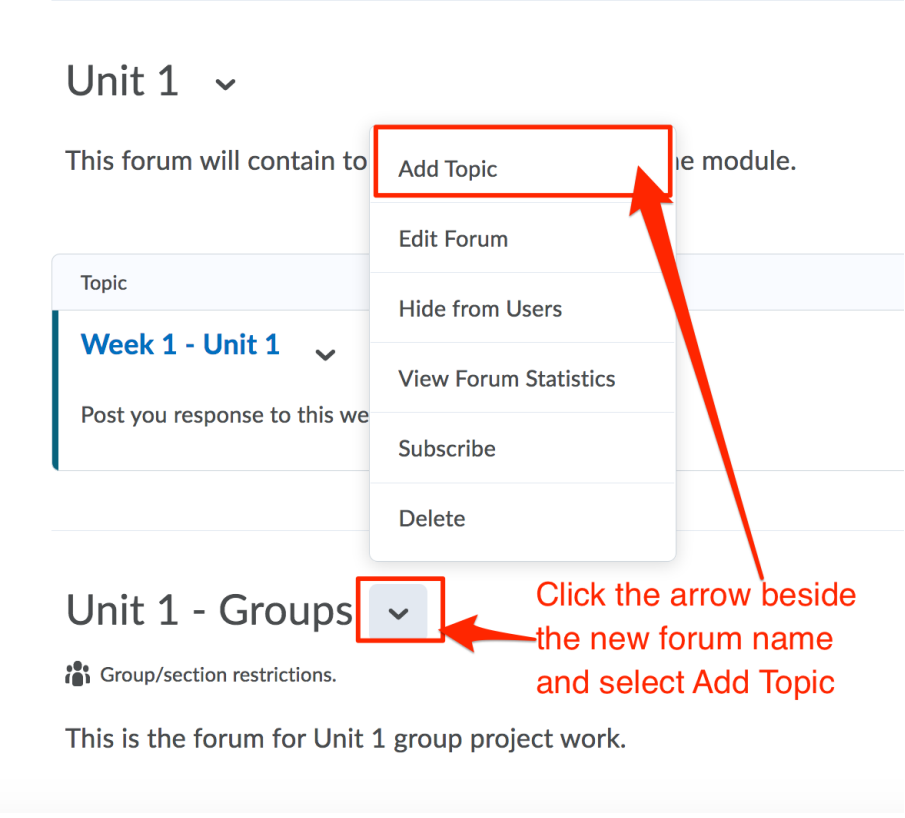
Step 5 – The group restriction will be displayed. Click *Save and Close* once complete.



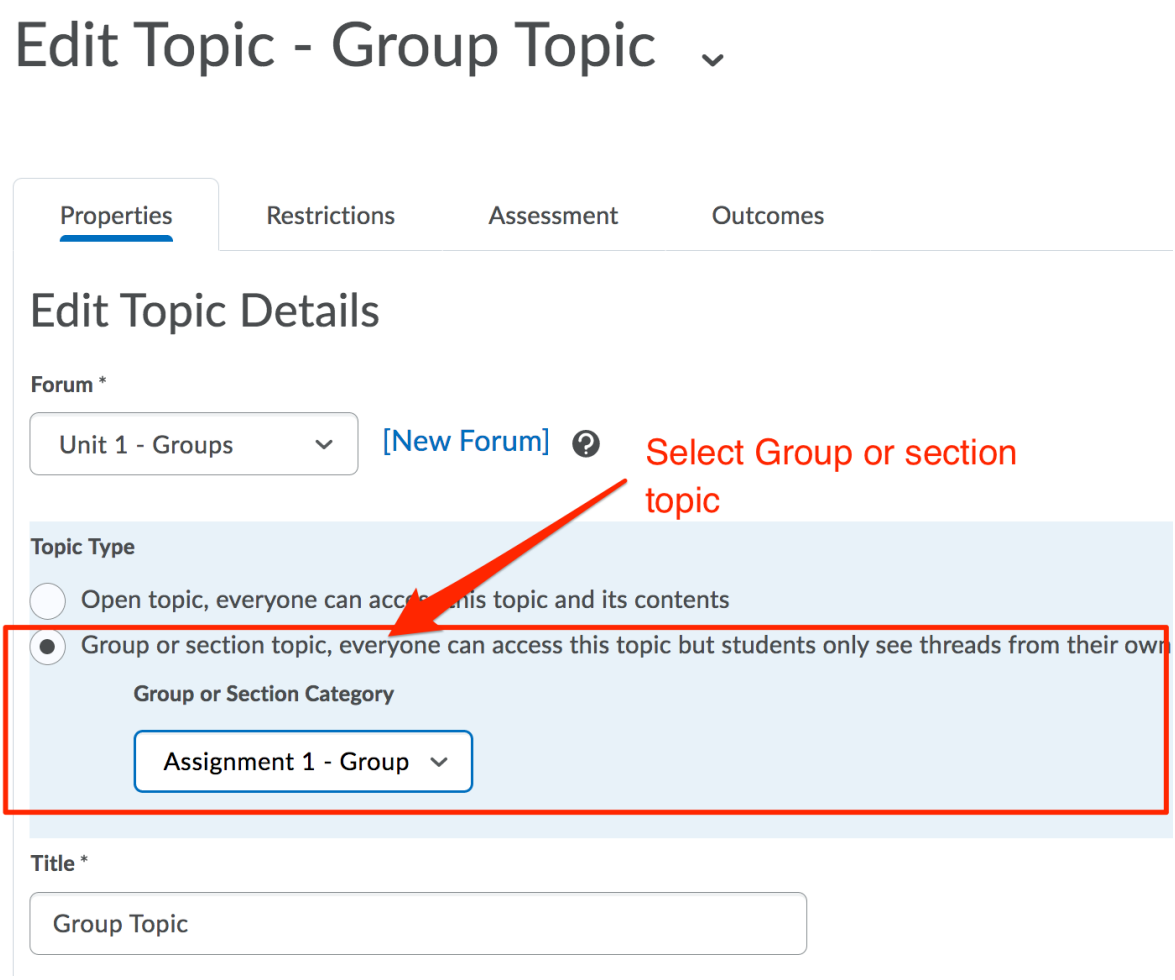
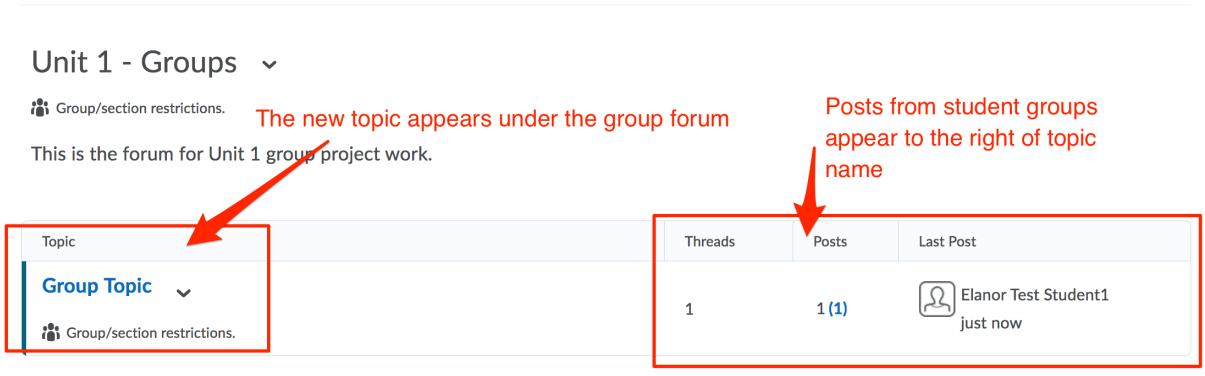
Step 6 – The new group forum is displayed in the *Discussions* area.



Step 7 – To create a new topic where the student groups can post to, go to the arrow beside the new forum name and click *Add Topic.*



Step 8 – In the *Properties* tab, select *Group or section topic, everyone can access the topic but students only see threads from their own group or section.* Select the relevant group set. Click *Save and Close* when the topic set up is complete.



Step 9 – The new topic appears under the group forum with student group posts appearing to the right of the topic name. Only students from within the same groups will see each other's posts but instructors will see all posts from all groups.