

## 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 be used to create a forum where the entire class participates. Dedicated discussion boards can also be created for student groups in the module.

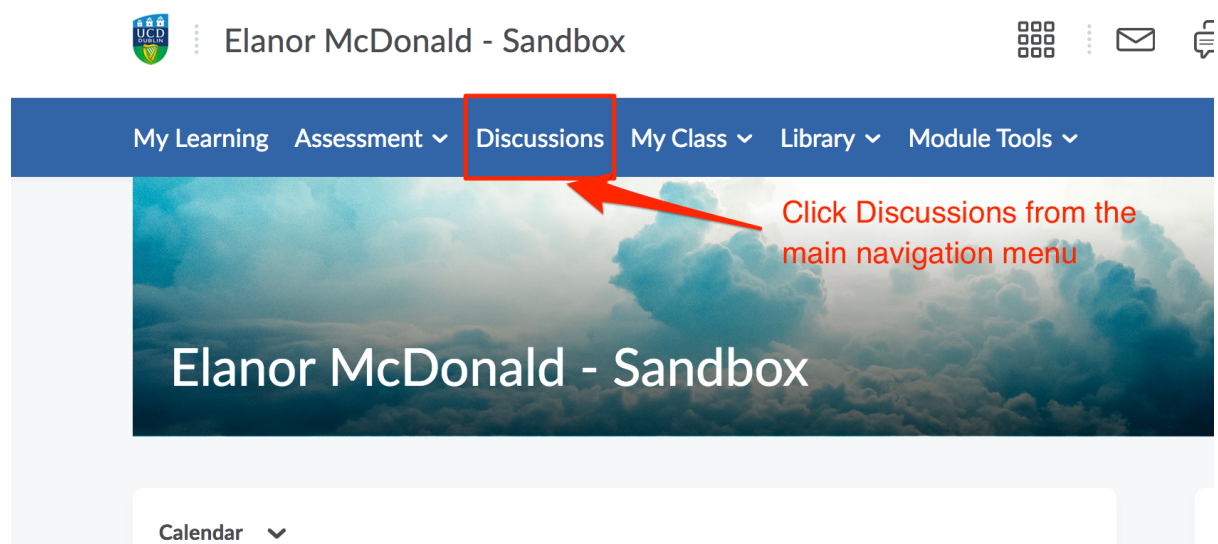
Using discussion boards in Brightspace is a useful way to:

- 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.

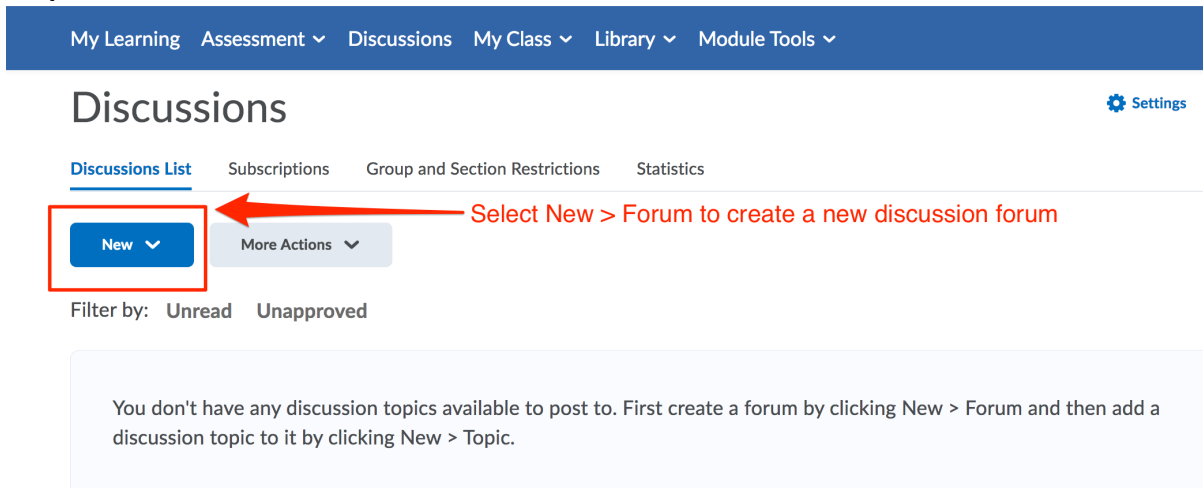
### Whole Class Discussions

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

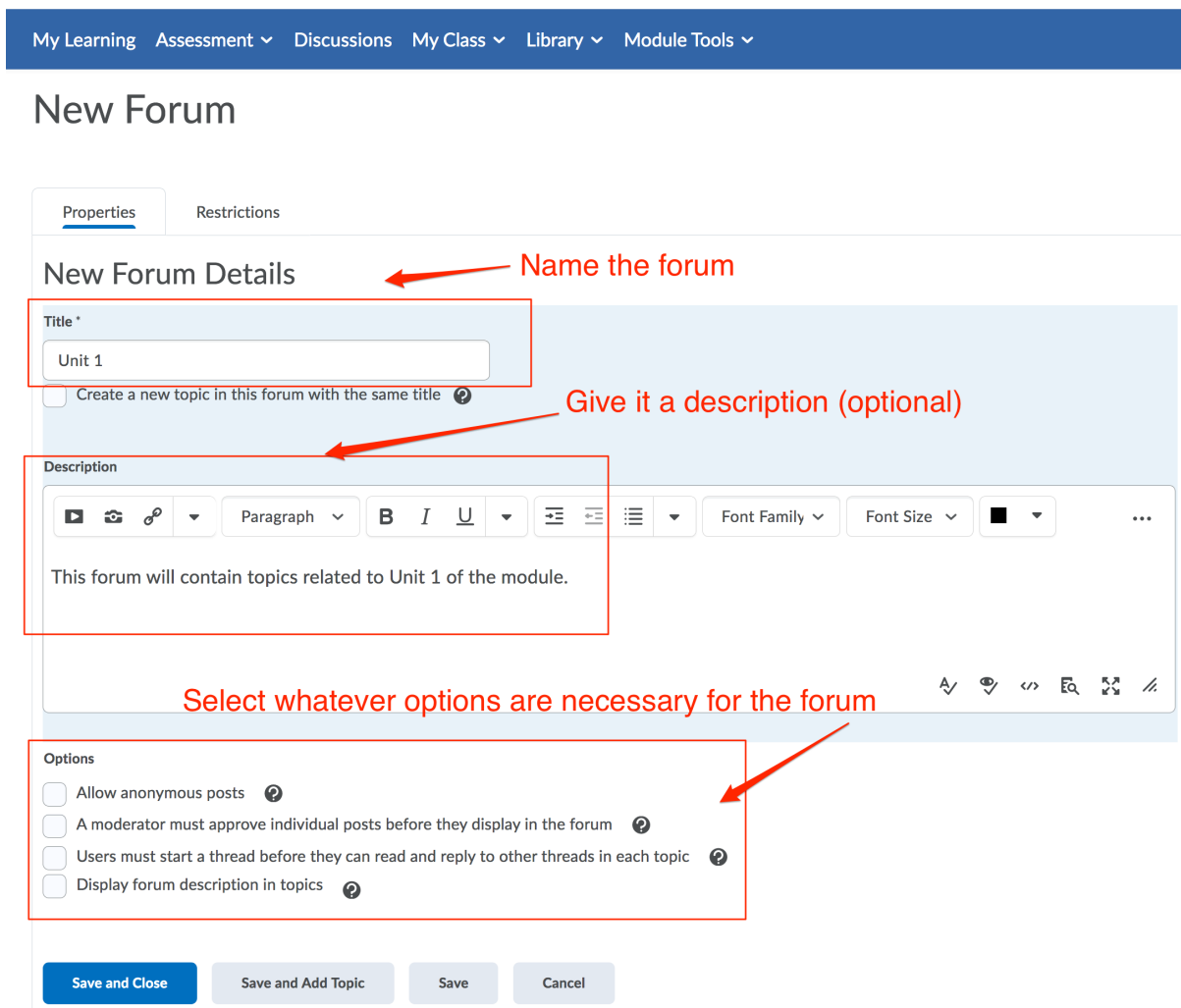


The screenshot shows the Brightspace user interface for 'Elanor McDonald - Sandbox'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with several menu items: 'My Learning', 'Assessment', 'Discussions', 'My Class', 'Library', and 'Module Tools'. The 'Discussions' menu item is highlighted with a red rectangular box. A red arrow points from the text 'Click Discussions from the main navigation menu' to the 'Discussions' menu item. Below the navigation bar, there is a header area with the text 'Elanor McDonald - Sandbox' and a 'Calendar' dropdown menu.

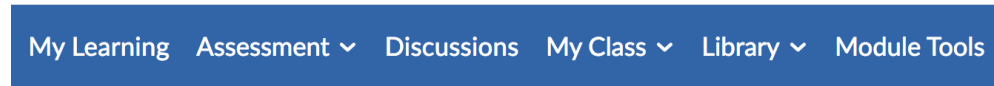
**Step 2 – Select *New* and then *New Forum* on the menu.**



**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.



## Edit Forum - Unit 1

Properties **Restrictions**

Hide from Users **You can choose to hide the forum from students**

**Availability**

Has Start Date  
26/03/2020 8:36 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Has End Date  
02/04/2020 8:36 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Display In Calendar

**Or set a date restriction**

**Locking Options** **You can also set locking options whereby the discussion forum cannot be edited by students**

Unlock forum

Lock forum

Unlock forum for a specific date range

Has Start Date  
26/03/2020 8:36 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

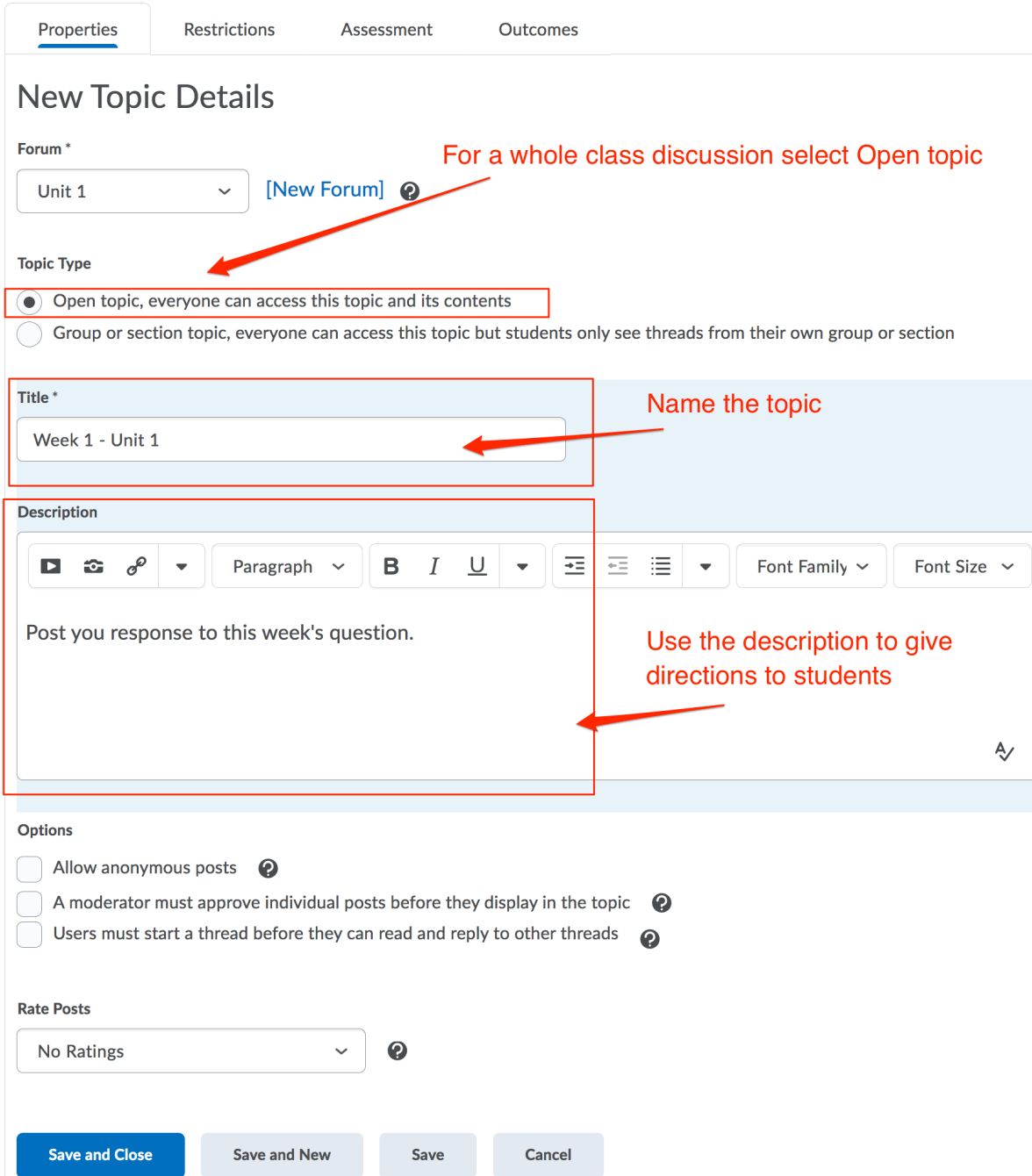
Has End Date  
02/04/2020 8:36 PM Now

**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.

## New Topic



**Properties** Restrictions Assessment Outcomes

### New Topic Details

Forum \*  
Unit 1 [New Forum] ?

Topic Type

- Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents
- Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads from their own group or section

Title \*  
Week 1 - Unit 1

Description

Post your response to this week's question.

Options

- Allow anonymous posts ?
- A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic ?
- Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads ?

Rate Posts  
No Ratings ?

Save and Close Save and New Save Cancel

**For a whole class discussion select Open topic**

**Name the topic**

**Use the description to give directions to students**

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

## Edit Topic - Week 1 - Unit 1 ▾

Properties **Restrictions** Assessment Outcomes

Hide from Users You can hide the topic from students

**Availability**

Has Start Date  
26/03/2020 8:53 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Has End Date  
02/04/2020 8:53 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Display In Calendar

**Locking Options**

Unlock topic  
 Lock topic  
 Unlock topic for a specific date range

Has Start Date  
26/03/2020 8:53 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Has End Date  
02/04/2020 8:53 PM Now  
*Ireland - Dublin*

Display in Calendar

And set date and locking options

**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.

## Edit Topic - Week 1 - Unit 1 ▾

Properties   Restrictions   **Assessment**   Outcomes

### Assessment

Grade Item  
 -- Choose a grade item -- ▾   [\[New Grade Item\]](#) ⓘ

Score Out Of  
 ⓘ

Rubrics

No rubrics selected.

[\[Create Rubric in New Window\]](#)

Posts  
 Allow assessment of individual posts ⓘ

Calculation  
 ▾    Include unassessed posts in the calculated topic score as zero ⓘ

You can choose to grade the discussion topic

Add a scoring rubric

And 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.

Discussions [Settings](#) [Help](#)


[Discussions List](#)   [Subscriptions](#)   [Group and Section Restrictions](#)   [Statistics](#)

▾    ▾

Filter by: [Unread](#)   [Unapproved](#)   ▾ Collapse All Forums

Unit 1 ▾   The new topic will appear in the discussions area

This forum will contain topics related to Unit 1 of the module.

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
<b>Week 1 - Unit 1</b> ▾ Post your response to this week's question.	1	1 (1)	 Elanor Test Student1 just now

Student responses will appear to the right of the topic name

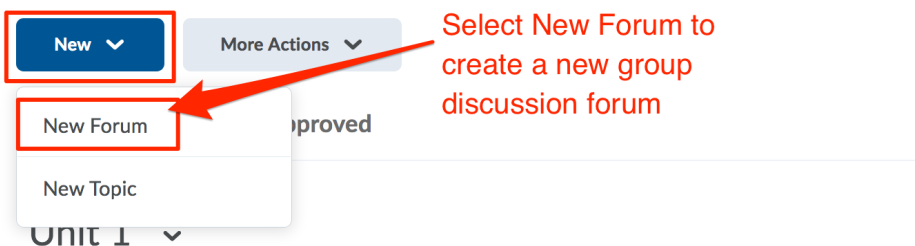
## Group Discussions

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.

## Discussions

[Discussions List](#) Subscriptions Group and Section Restrictions Statistics



The screenshot shows the 'Discussions' page with a 'New' dropdown menu open. The 'New Forum' option is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow. A red text annotation reads: 'Select New Forum to create a new group discussion forum'. Below the dropdown, the text 'UNIT 1' is visible.

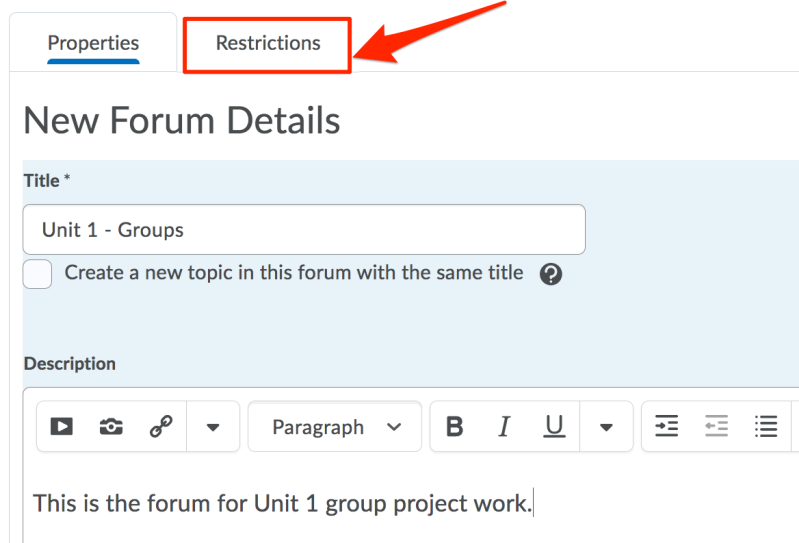
This forum will contain topics related to Unit 1 of the module.

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

## New Forum

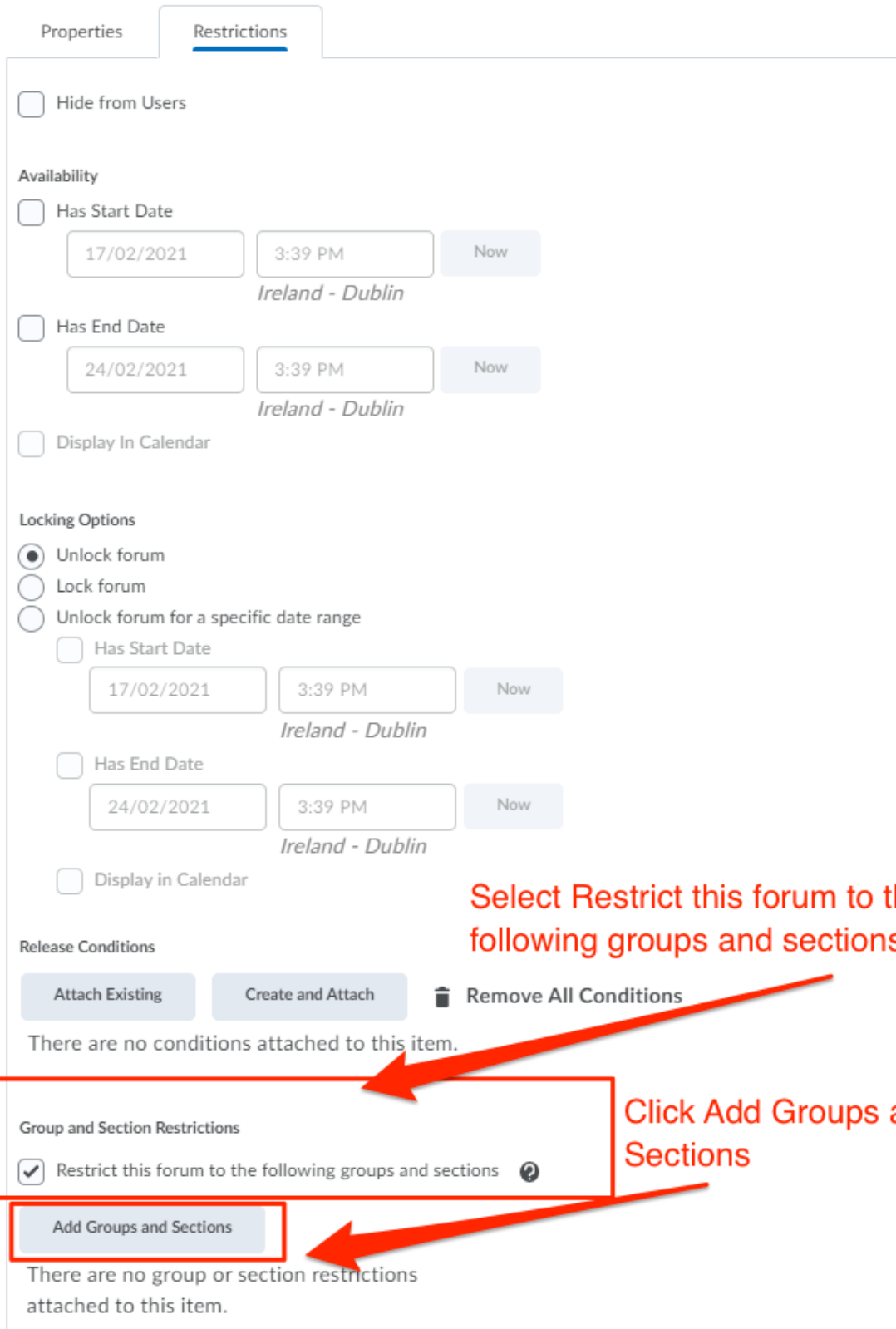
Go to the Restrictions tab to set the group preference



The screenshot shows the 'New Forum' creation page. The 'Restrictions' tab is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow. The 'Title' field contains 'Unit 1 - Groups'. Below the title field, there is a checkbox labeled 'Create a new topic in this forum with the same title'. The 'Description' field contains the text 'This is the forum for Unit 1 group project work.' The page also shows a rich text editor toolbar with options for Paragraph, Bold, Italic, Underline, and List.



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



Properties **Restrictions**

Hide from Users

**Availability**

Has Start Date

17/02/2021 3:39 PM Now

Ireland - Dublin

Has End Date

24/02/2021 3:39 PM Now

Ireland - Dublin

Display In Calendar

**Locking Options**

Unlock forum

Lock forum

Unlock forum for a specific date range

Has Start Date

17/02/2021 3:39 PM Now

Ireland - Dublin

Has End Date

24/02/2021 3:39 PM Now

Ireland - Dublin

Display in Calendar

**Release Conditions**

Attach Existing Create and Attach Remove All Conditions

There are no conditions attached to this item.

**Group and Section Restrictions**

Restrict this forum to the following groups and sections ?

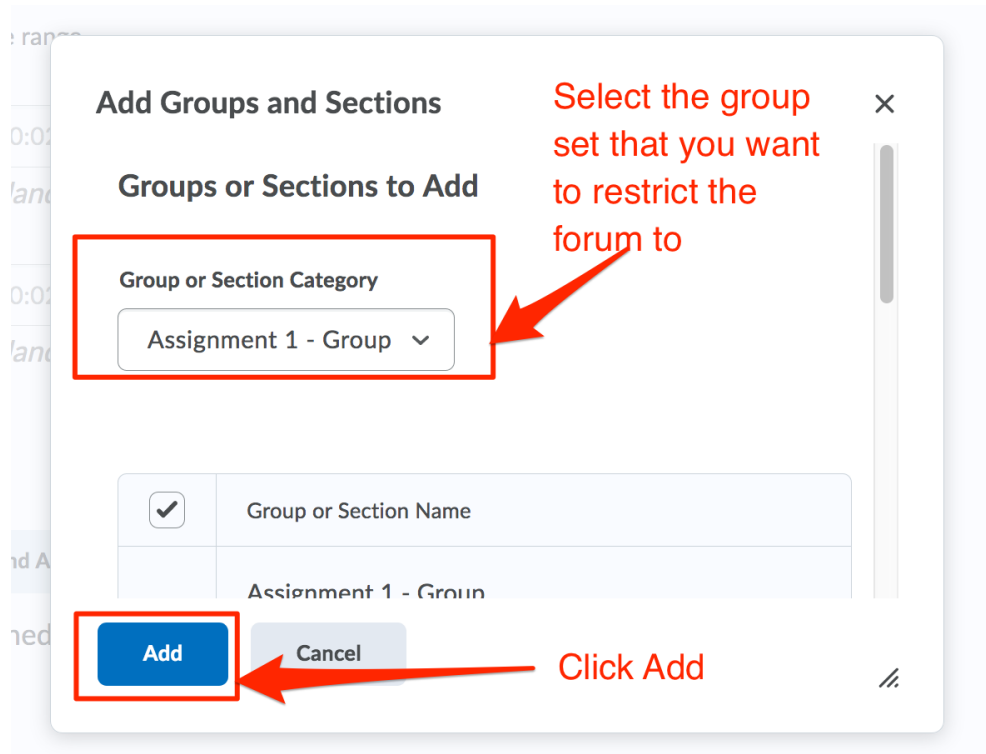
Add Groups and Sections

There are no group or section restrictions attached to this item.

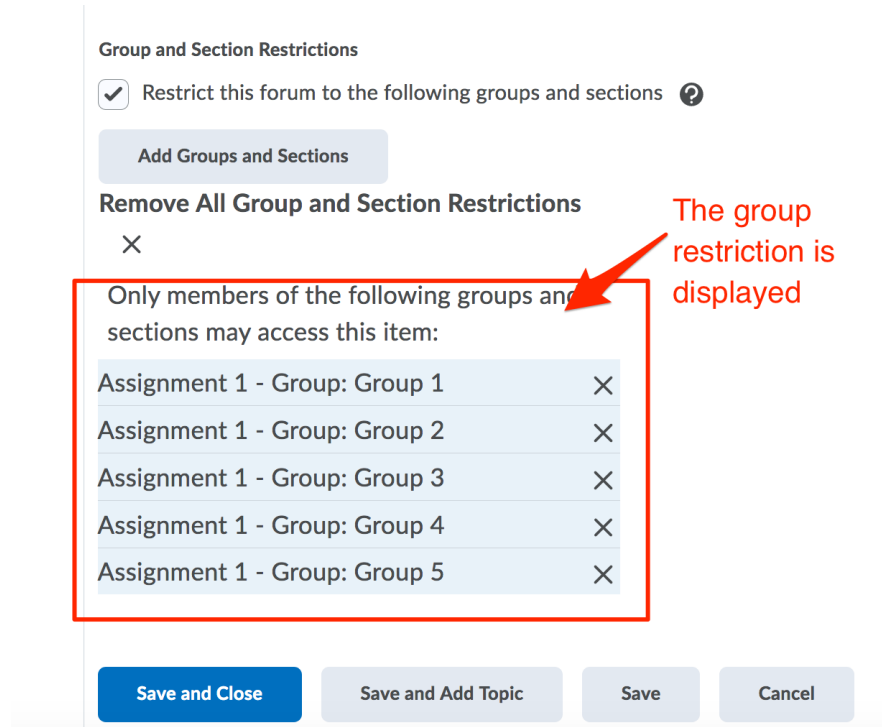
Select Restrict this forum to the following groups and sections

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.

The screenshot shows the 'Discussions' interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Discussions List', 'Subscriptions', 'Group and Section Restrictions', and 'Statistics'. Below these are buttons for 'New' and 'More Actions'. A filter section shows 'Unread' and 'Unapproved'. Under 'Unit 1', there is a description: 'This forum will contain topics related to Unit 1 of the module.' A table lists a topic 'Week 1 - Unit 1' with 1 thread and 1 post. Below the table, a new forum 'Unit 1 - Groups' is highlighted with a red box. A red arrow points from the text 'The new group forum is displayed in the Discussions area' to the 'Unit 1 - Groups' forum name.

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Week 1 - Unit 1	1	1 (1)	

**Unit 1 - Groups**  
Group/section restrictions.  
This is the forum for Unit 1 group project work.

**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*.

The screenshot shows the 'Unit 1 - Groups' forum page. A dropdown menu is open over the forum name, with 'Add Topic' selected and highlighted by a red box. A red arrow points from the text 'Click the arrow beside the new forum name and select Add Topic' to the dropdown arrow. Another red arrow points from the text 'The new group forum is displayed in the Discussions area' to the 'Add Topic' option in the menu.

**Unit 1 - Groups**  
Group/section restrictions.  
This is the forum for Unit 1 group project work.

- Add Topic
- Edit Forum
- Hide from Users
- View Forum Statistics
- Subscribe
- Delete

**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.

## Edit Topic - Group Topic ▾

Properties
Restrictions
Assessment
Outcomes

### Edit Topic Details

**Forum \***

Unit 1 - Groups ▾
[New Forum]
?

Select Group or section topic

**Topic Type**

Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents

**Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads from their own group or section.**

**Group or Section Category**

Assignment 1 - Group ▾

**Title \***

Group Topic

**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.

Unit 1 - Groups ▾

Group/section restrictions. The new topic appears under the group forum

This is the forum for Unit 1 group project work.

Topic

**Group Topic** ▾

Group/section restrictions.

Threads	Posts	Last Post
1	1 (1)	Elanor Test Student1 just now

Posts from student groups appear to the right of topic name