



Division of
Business

ALUMNI GROUP

Discussion Board User Guide

Online version

www.unisa.edu.au/helpstudents/discussion/



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Discussion groups are password-protected so that only learners enrolled in a course can participate. The process of logging on is the same as for other password-protected areas within the University's computer network.

- Click the link to the discussion group in the navigation frame of the course Web site.

The log on window will appear, as shown below.



- Enter your user name and password.

See [Logging on to password-protected learning resources](#) for more information about logging on with your UniSA student user name and password.

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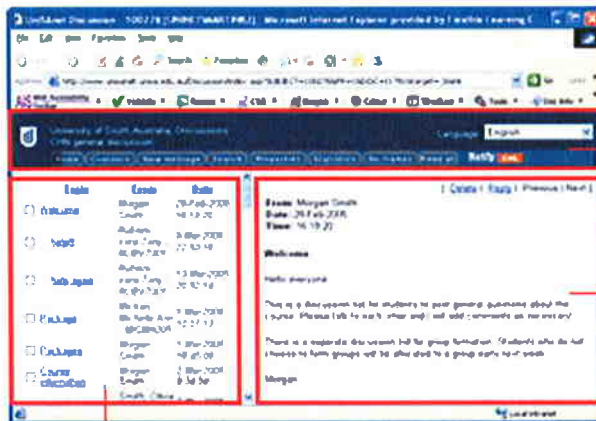
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The discussion group screen consists of three frames:

- [Menu frame](#)
- [Contents frame](#)
- [Message frame](#)



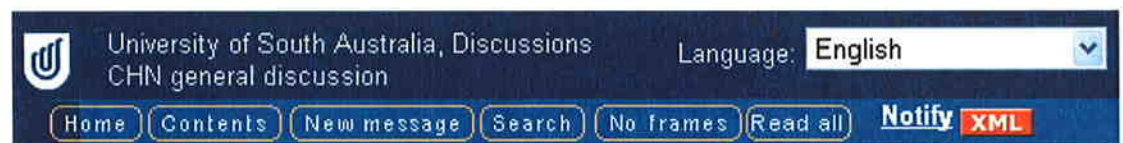
Menu frame

Message frame

Contents frame

Menu frame

The menu frame contains the following elements:



Discussion group title

The title is important to identify the many discussion groups that may be contained within one course. Each will be used for a different learning activity.

Function buttons

The function buttons include:

- **Home** – takes you to the course home page.
- **Contents** – takes you back to the contents frame if you are viewing the discussion in the “No frames” mode.
- **New message** – creates a new message.

- **Search** – locates any word within the discussion.
- **No frames** – view one frame at a time (either the content frame or the message frame).
- **Read all** – view all messages at once.


Contents frame

The contents frame lists:

- **Topic** of the message.
- **From** whom the message was posted.
- **Date** on which the message was posted.

To sort the messages according to the topic, sender or date:

- Click on the underlined **Topic**, **From** or **Date** links, as indicated below.

 <u>Topic</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Welcome</u>	<i>Morgan Smith</i>	<i>28-Feb-2005 16:18:20</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>help!!!</u>	<i>Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001</i>	<i>8-Mar-2005 22:53:16</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>help again</u>	<i>Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001</i>	<i>13-Mar-2005 20:52:14</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Package</u>	<i>Mickan, Michelle Ann - MICMA005</i>	<i>1-Mar-2005 10:07:13</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Packages</u>	<i>Morgan Smith</i>	<i>1-Mar-2005 16:45:08</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Course information</u>	<i>Morgan Smith</i>	<i>2-Mar-2005 9:34:34</i>

Message frame

To read any of the messages listed in the contents frame:

- Click on the underlined message title in the **Topic** column—the message will appear in the message frame.

To view all messages posted to the discussion:

- Click the **Read all** link in the menu frame—all messages will appear in the message frame.

To display the previous message or the next message (if available) in the discussion thread:

- Click the **Previous** or **Next** link at the top of the message frame, as shown below (the **Previous** link is not active in this example because the message displayed is the first in the discussion thread):

Language: English 

[Properties](#) [Statistics](#) [No frames](#) [Read all](#) [Notify](#) [XML](#)

 [[Reply](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#)]

From: Morgan Smith
Date: 28-Feb-2005
Time: 16:18:20

Welcome

Hello everyone

This is a discussion list for students to post general questions about the

To reply to a message:

- Click the **Reply** link at the top of the message frame, as shown above.

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To open any of the messages listed in the contents frame:

- Click on the underlined message title in the **Topic** column—the message will appear in the contents frame on the right.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Welcome</u>	Morgan Smith	28-Feb-2005 16:18:20
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>help!!!</u>	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	8-Mar-2005 22:53:16
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>help again</u>	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	13-Mar-2005 20:52:14
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Package</u>	Mickan, Michelle Ann - MICMA005	1-Mar-2005 10:07:13
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Packages</u>	Morgan Smith	1-Mar-2005 16:45:08
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Course information</u>	Morgan Smith	2-Mar-2005 9:34:34

To view all messages posted to the discussion:

- Click the **Read all** link in the menu frame—all messages will appear in the contents frame on the right.

University of South Australia, Discussions
CHN general discussion
Language: English

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- Click on the **Reply** link at the top of the message frame, as shown below, to respond to a message.
- Click the **Previous** or **Next** link to display the previous message or the next message (if available) in the discussion thread.

Language: English 

[Properties](#) [Statistics](#) [No frames](#) [Read all](#) [Notify](#) [XML](#)

 [[Reply](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#)]

From: Morgan Smith
Date: 28-Feb-2005
Time: 16:18:20

Welcome

Hello everyone

This is a discussion list for students to post general questions about the

Message hierarchy

The contents frame will display the **Topic**, **Date** and **From** whom the message was posted. The image below shows the message hierarchy:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome	Morgan Smith	28-Feb-2005 16:18:20
<input type="checkbox"/> help!!!	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	8-Mar-2005 22:53:16
<input type="checkbox"/> help again	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	13-Mar-2005 20:52:14
<input type="checkbox"/> Package	Mickan, Michelle Ann - MICMA005	1-Mar-2005 10:07:13
<input type="checkbox"/> Packages	Morgan Smith	1-Mar-2005 16:45:08
<input type="checkbox"/> Course information	Morgan Smith	2-Mar-2005 9:34:34

The messages posted are organised in the following manner:

- The topic titles on the far left of the frame are original topic threads posted by a discussion group member.
- Indented topics with or without the "Re:" prefix are replies to the original topic thread (a reply without the "Re:" prefix indicates that the respondent changed the topic title)—this is called a *discussion thread*.

Open an attachment

If a message has a file attached, you will see a link to the file at the bottom of the message frame, as shown below:

[[Delete](#) | [Reply](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#)]

From: Morgan Smith
Date: 12-May-2005
Time: 12:15:51



Hello everyone

Hello everyone

It was good to meet you all last week. Now I can put some faces to some names.

You need one group evaluation that you negotiate with each other. I have posted this in various places but here it is again!

Morgan

 [Weighted mark](#) 

- Click the link to see the file details, as shown below.

Attachment details

Title

Weighted mark

Size

31,232 bytes

Estimated download time @ 56 Kbps (dial-up modem)

0 hours, 0 minutes, 4 seconds

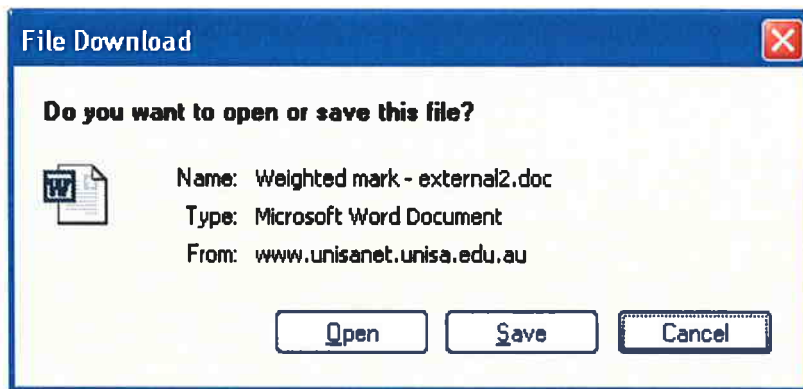
Estimated download time @ 1.5 Mbps (broadband)

0 hours, 0 minutes, 0 seconds bytes

[Download this file](#) 

- Click the **Download this file** link.

You will be prompted to open or save the file:



- Click **Open** to open the document.
- Click **Save** to save the document to disk.
- Click **Cancel** to quit the operation.

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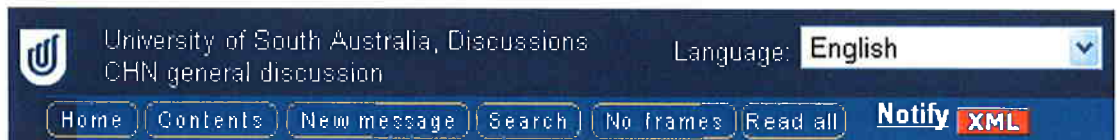
Help contacts

When posting a message to a discussion, you can either post a new message or reply to an existing one.

New message

To post a new message:

- Click **New message** on the top of the discussion window, as indicated by the arrow in the image below.

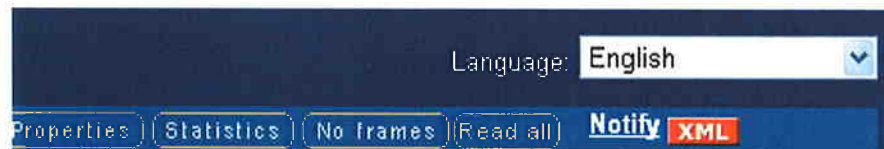


OR

Reply to message

To reply to a message:

- Click the underlined title of the message you want to reply to, in the **Topic** column. The message will open in the message frame on the right of the discussion window.
- Click the **Reply** link at the top of the message, as indicated by the arrow in the image below.



[[Reply](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#)]

From: Morgan Smith
Date: 28-Feb-2005
Time: 16:18:20

Welcome

Hello everyone

This is a discussion list for students to post general questions about the

Student help: post a message to a discussion group

A new message form will open in the contents frame, as shown below.

Topic: ①

Message: ②

Post item ③

File Attachment (optional):

Type:

Title:

1. Type a suitable title in the **Topic** text box.
OR
Leave the topic title unchanged if you are replying to a message in an existing discussion thread.
2. Type your message in the **Message** text box.
3. Click the **Post Item** button.

The contents frame will refresh to show the title of your message, your name, the date and time it was posted.

Attach a file

It may be possible to attach a file to your message (if the Course Coordinator selected this option at the time the discussion group was created). File formats that can be attached include:

- GIF
- JPEG
- Acrobat PDF
- HTML
- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- ZIP

The file attachment option appears at the bottom of the new message window, as shown below:

The screenshot shows a form for posting a message. At the top is a large text area for the message content. Below it is a 'Post item' button, marked with a red circle containing the number 4. Further down is the 'File Attachment (optional):' section. It includes a text box for the file name, a 'Browse...' button (marked with a red circle 1), a 'Type:' dropdown menu currently set to 'Acrobat', and a 'Guess' button (marked with a red circle 2). Below the type dropdown is a 'Title:' text box (marked with a red circle 3). At the bottom of the form is another 'Post item' button (marked with a red circle 4).

To attach a file:

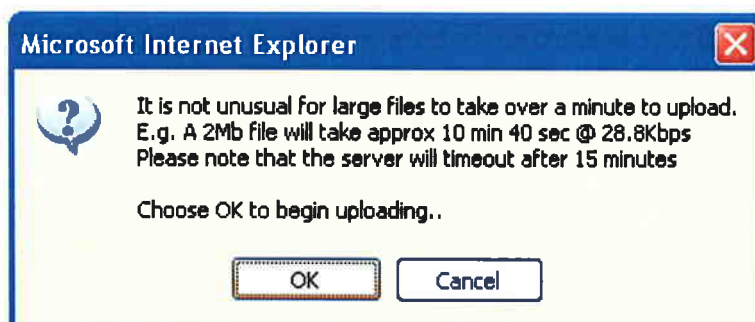
1. Click the **Browse** button to locate and select the file.
2. Check that the file type is correct. If not, select the correct type from the drop down list or click the **Guess** button if you are unsure.
3. Type a suitable title in the **Title** text box.
4. Click the **Post item** button to post your message with the file attachment.

You may see a warning message, as shown below, prompting you to confirm that the file type selected is correct.



- Click **OK** if you have already checked the file type.

You will see a second message, as shown below, warning you that large files may take some time to upload.



- Click **OK** to begin uploading.

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To edit the messages that you posted to a discussion group:

- Click the underlined message title in the **Topic** column—the message will appear in the message frame.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome	Morgan Smith	28-Feb-2005 16:18:20
<input type="checkbox"/> help!!!	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	8-Mar-2005 22:53:16
<input type="checkbox"/> help again	Rubsov, Vera Tony - RUBVT001	13-Mar-2005 20:52:14
<input type="checkbox"/> Package	Mickan, Michelle Ann - MICMA005	1-Mar-2005 10:07:13
<input type="checkbox"/> Packages	Morgan Smith	1-Mar-2005 16:45:08
<input type="checkbox"/> Course information	Morgan Smith	2-Mar-2005 9:34:34

- Click the **Edit** link at the top of the message frame, as indicated below.




[[Delete](#) | [Edit](#) | [Reply](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#)]

From: Kelly Martin
Date: 21-Jun-2005
Time: 11:39:07

Re: Workshop

I agree!

- Edit the message in the **Message** text box.
- Click the **Update item** button, as indicated below.


Language: English 

[Properties](#) [Statistics](#) [No frames](#) [Read all](#) [Notify](#) [XML](#)

Topic:

Message:

I agree!



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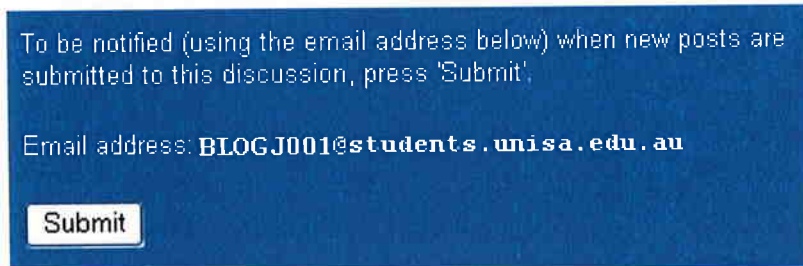
Help contacts

It is possible to request email notification each time a new message has been posted to a specific discussion group. The email will contain the URL for the new message. This will allow you to respond rapidly without having to remember to log on to the discussion group to check for new postings.

- Click the **Notify** link in the menu frame, as indicated below.

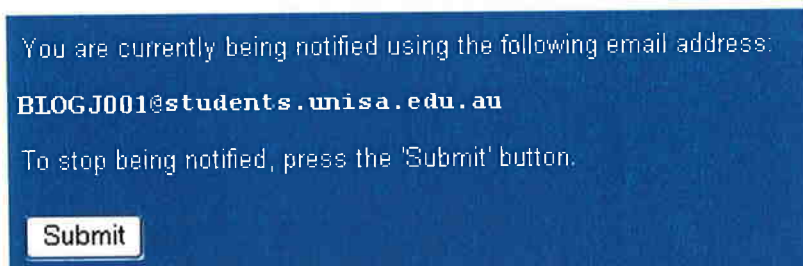


Your UniSA student email address will be shown in the contents frame:



- Click the **Submit** button.

The window will refresh, as shown below, indicating that the notify process was successful. To stop being notified of discussion postings, simply click the **Submit** button again.



Stop notification
Enrolled students

If you are enrolled in a course and have permission to access the discussion then you will need to:

Student help: email notification

- Open the discussion.
- Click the notify button.
- Click the Submit button as shown in the image above.

Non-enrolled students

If you are no longer enrolled in a course but are still receiving discussion notification then you will need to:

- [Click here](#) to access the Discussion Subscriptions window.

The logon window will open as shown in the following image:



- Enter your user name and password

The Discussion Subscription window will open as shown in the following image:

UniSAnet™ Discussion subscriptions - Microsoft Internet Explorer pr...

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help Links .Mac

Back Back Forward Stop Home Refresh Favorites

Address <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/Discussion/NotifyList.asp> Go

Discussion subscriptions

You are currently listed to be notified of new posts to the following discussion groups:

Course	Discussion Title	Unsubscribe
12657	General Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
27765	Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> ①
26795	Coffee Shop	<input type="checkbox"/>

To stop receiving notifications for a discussion, select that discussion from the list above then press 'Unsubscribe'.

Unsubscribe ②

1. Click the check box for the discussion that you want to stop notification.
2. Click the **Unsubscribe** button.

The selected discussion will be removed from the list.

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When taking part in an online discussion, interact with the other participants as you would in a face-to-face discussion. Here are some suggestions for courteous and effective online communication.

Communicating courteously

You will be following accepted standards of Web etiquette by:

- Introducing yourself briefly when making your first contribution – as you would when meeting someone for the first time.
- Constructing your contributions as suggestions, eg 'It seems to me...', 'I think...'. Absolute, definite statements like 'It is obvious that...', 'Clearly...', 'We all know...' are difficult to substantiate and may inhibit contributions from others.
- Challenging ideas in ways that are respectful of others. If possible, offer a positive comment before a negative one. Note that your name may be automatically associated with your comment.
- Reading your contribution carefully before you send it. Remember that it will be read and not spoken. The tones and pauses that we use in speech may not be clear and the message may be interpreted differently to your intention. Choose your words carefully.
- Using humour carefully. It can be misunderstood and cause unintended offence.
- Responding to others and not just 'lurking' (reading others comments without contributing). We have a commitment to each other to join in and let the other person know that we have read their ideas, even if we don't have a lot to say about them.

Communicating effectively

Effective communication in online discussions also involves:

- Being moderate in your contributions. Over-long contributions are self-defeating in that others will not read them. Present your ideas in digestible screen-sized chunks.
- Keeping to the topic under discussion. This is not the place for tirades against the lecturer, other students or the world in general. Keep your questions and comments relevant to the focus of the discussion group.
- Making sure that you have addressed any specific questions or topics that the lecturer has requested.
- Being aware of the audience that you are writing to and the range of beliefs and attitudes they may hold.

Adding your ideas to a topic being discussed

You will gain much from an online discussion if you can enrich your understanding by building on the contributions of others. You can do this by:

- Agreeing with what they have said and explaining why you agree.
- Re-stating or clarifying or explaining in your own words what they have said.
- Suggesting implications or logical consequences of their ideas.
- Giving examples or evidence supporting their ideas.
- Making a 'yes, but...' statement, partly agreeing with what they have said and then offering a further perspective.
- Explaining why you disagree with their statement.
- Suggesting a completely different viewpoint on the topic.
- Asking another participant to justify, explain or elaborate on their contribution.
- Inviting others to comment on - add to or critique - your views.

- Summarising or finding patterns in the contributions that have been made so far.
- Suggesting another direction the discussion could take.
- Inserting links to web sites in your discussion.
- Sharing journal references or other useful resources which are relevant to the discussion.
- Asking a question.

Introducing a new topic

Some ways that you can start a discussion on a new topic are by:

- Saying what you understand the topic to mean , eg "What I think xxxx means is, or by offering a definition you have come across , eg 'I like Blogg's definition of xxxx as ...'"
- Saying why you think the topic is significant, eg 'I think xxxx is important because...'"
- Saying what you find interesting or surprising about it.
- Telling of the insights you have gained from your reading, listening, thinking.
- Explaining why you consider the topic to be irrelevant or unimportant.
- Stating what you don't understand or like about a topic; what puzzles you.
- Asking a question relating to a new topic.

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