

Create Question-and-Answer and Social Forums

In face-to-face classes, students naturally connect with you and with their peers. These interactions often include asking and answering questions about the course. You can continue to encourage these interactions in an online course by creating a question-and-answer forum in which students can post general questions about the course and assignments. You can also create a separate, informal social space for student-to-student interactions.

To begin, follow the directions for creating a discussion forum in your learning management system (LMS) and leave the dates open. You may want to give each forum a catchy title that encourages students to check it out. For example, call the Q&A forum “Online Office” or “Ask the Prof” and the social forum “Class Café” or “The Watercooler.”

Please note the links below for creating discussion forums in some of the more popular LMSs. Send an email to your students introducing the forums and describing their different purposes. See below for a sample email.

Dear students,

I know that the switch to online classes can feel a little isolating. You and your fellow students are used to chatting before and after class. During these conversations, or even when you meet a fellow classmate or me around campus, you may ask us a quick question about the course. Going online means we will miss these informal interactions.

To make up for this, I have set up two discussion forums in the course. One is called “Online Office Hours,” and the other is the “Class Café.” I invite you to post questions you have about the course to Online Office Hours, which I will monitor regularly to respond to your questions. You can also review the posts to see if your question has already been asked and answered. I also invite you to connect with your classmates in the Class Café forum!

Please let me know if you have any questions at all! I am here to support your work and to ensure that your learning is not interrupted.

Sincerely,

Links for Creating a Discussion Forum

[Canvas](#)

[Blackboard](#)

[Brightspace](#)

[Moodle](#)

[Sakai](#)