

Netiquette: Ground Rules for Online Discussions during IIMBx MOOCs on edX Platform

All registered participants of a MOOC on edX will have access to a course-specific online discussion forum. Participation in such forums is encouraged because it contributes significantly in the form of peer learning. Discussion forums are commonly used in online courses to provide learners an opportunity to reflect on, discuss and share knowledge gained from the online content.

Participation in these forums is strongly encouraged by the course staff.

Please note that certain basic netiquette rules need to be diligently followed while participating in these forums. Forums are monitored closely by our staff and any unsuitable content will be flagged off and removed with due warning to the person posting it. Repeated (more than twice) acts of posting unsuitable/irrelevant/promotional content and/or usage of bad language will result in the person being blocked from participation in the forum.

Here are some guidelines for you to follow in order to make the discussion forum a place of sharing, learning and interacting with your peer learners. Following these rules will help you maximize your online learning experience.

Ground Rules for Online Discussion Forums

General

1. Discussion forum is accessible to all registered participants. Your user details (as given during registration) will be used for posting – no anonymity is allowed.
2. If there are any technical issues with respect to posting, replying or viewing threads in the discussion forum, kindly get in touch with edX Technical Support team or bring it to the attention of course staff.
3. Once posted, a discussion goes live and cannot be edited/deleted by you – so think twice (if needed read your content aloud) before posting.

Content

4. You can engage in the discussion forums by:
 - a. Starting your own new discussion thread. *Please note that we encourage you to check if there is already an existing thread (started by another learner) on the same topic that you wish to post on. Only if such a relevant thread is absent, should you start a new thread (post) yourself. The purpose is to encourage conversation among peer learners.*
 - b. Replying to an existing discussion thread started by the faculty, moderator or peer learners.
5. Only post content relevant to the online course that you are participating in. Any other content which is found to be unsuitable or irrelevant will be deleted.
6. Remember that the content you post is shared publicly with all registered participants.
7. You are encouraged to share content that you deem useful to peer learners. Please remember to cite sources as applicable.

Language/Writing Style

8. Pay considerable attention to the language used and your writing style while posting online.
Excessive use of acronyms, emoticons and typical texting phrases (used in SMS) is discouraged.
9. Upper case is not allowed since it is considered equivalent to shouting.
10. The message you type may appear clear to you, but not so to the reader who is not in front of you at the time of reading. One way to avoid misinterpretation is to read out your post loudly to make sure it conveys the correct meaning before posting.
11. Respect your peer learners. Even if you disagree or differ with an opinion expressed online, do so using appropriate language and do not, under any circumstance, get personal.
12. Positive and critical feedback is good – but criticizing for the sake of it using negative and/or abusive language will not be tolerated.
13. Be brief, concise and to the point without being preachy or pompous.
14. Remember that in a virtual learning environment, participants come from diverse geographies and cultures. Be sensitive to that.
15. Do not use the discussion forums to solve your homework problems.

And remember, most of these guidelines are “common sense.” We love to listen to your thoughts in these discussion forums. After all, discussion forums lay the foundation for strong online interactions, student-faculty engagement and peer learning. So, don’t just read what others are posting – join in!