USING THE DISCUSSION FORUMS

The discussion forum is the main communication tool with other students and course staff. You can use them to ask questions, share insights and participate in discussions on the subject.

To make things easier to find, edX forums are structured in categories and subcategories. You will find several broad categories to address the most common general subjects (greetings, certificates, problems with the platform, etc..), and categories related to the course content, which are the place to ask questions about it and discuss the course subjects. Before asking a question on a general topic, go to the FAQ section of the platform to see if the answer is included there.

General categories don't have subcategories, so you publish directly on them from the Discussion tab on the upper menu. The categories related to the course content have subcategories, and you have to select one to post. There is usually a category for each module and a subcategory for each learning sequence. You can publish a content related post to a subcategory by selecting it from the Discussion tool of the top menu, but it's easier to do it from the link you will find under each video, this way it will be automatically assigned to the corresponding subcategory. Just click on the "New Message" button.

The first thing to do before posting is to **check the existing entries in the category of interest**. You can use the magnifying glass on the left-hand side. Chances are that someone has asked or discussed what you would like to know or say, so maybe your question is already answered or you can join a conversation already begun on the subject. You can see the discussion associated with a video by clicking on the "Show Discussion" button you will find below.

Write clearly. Some tips on how to do it:

Use complete sentences

Avoid capitalization (in Internet capitals are used IF YOU WANT TO SHOUT)

Prevent the use of short words and acronyms in the text

Avoid excessive use of punctuation (!!!)

Avoid using jargon

Be polite. It is also important to note that in the course there are participants from many different countries with different cultures, opinions and perspectives. Therefore we must try to be polite and focus on the issue, leaving aside the irony, arrogance and other forms of writing that can lead to misunderstandings. Always write thinking of helping others.

We reserve the right to delete offensive or provocative posts. We can equally delete those posts that are not related to the course content.

Be concise. Selecting the title of the message is very important, it is the way others can locate your message when searching for a given topic. Write it clearly and try to be accurate.

Upvote good posts. This applies to questions and answers. Click on the green plus button so that good posts can be found more easily.

Observe the Honor Code: You can ask for help to clarify the concepts that appear in the assignments' questions; but please do not directly ask for answers to the questions or post your answers, as you won't be helping others to learn and the post will be deleted.

Besides being the mechanism to obtain assistance from the course team, the forums are a great tool to learn from our peers and share knowledge. Therefore we encourage you to help others by answering their questions and creating threads of debate. In many cases the student responses are correctly answered by other students, and this helps the learning process of both.

The posts made by course staff carry a blue label marking them.

The general categories are:

Welcome and greetings

Good-bye and farewell

Schedule and dates: Doubts about course schedules, publication days, due dates, etc.

Certificates

Suggestions, congratulations and complaints: to express your opinion about the course and propose improvements to it and to the platform.

Platform problems

General: questions not addressed in the other categories