Faculty of Health Sciences  
School of Nursing & Midwifery

Discussion forum etiquette

The discussion forums in your topics are for the discussion of issues relating to your topic and you are encouraged to use them. They provide you with an opportunity to meet with other students online and learn from each other. They can be a very helpful tool to challenge your thinking, share experiences and insights, and develop a sense of community.

Discussion forums:

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Some forums are for general use, for you to raise and discuss relevant matters of your choice. Others may require you to discuss specific topics, and may be assessed.

All forums will be monitored by your topic coordinator and/or lecturer at least weekly but they may not actively participate in all discussions. If you have concerns to raise with the topic coordinator or if you want them to answer a question privately, please contact them by email or telephone or make an appointment to visit them in their office.

Appropriate online behaviour

The discussion forum space is an extended classroom with similar expectations concerning behaviour. Be aware of your audience—anything you contribute to a forum can be read by your peers, your lecturers and, in certain circumstances, other University officials.

A discussion forum is a powerful communication tool with immediate impact and, because it is written, the nuances of face-to-face conversation (such as facial expression and tone of voice) are absent. Therefore, the effect of your words may be different from what you intended.

To use the discussion forums wisely and effectively:

- **be respectful and polite:**
  - be cordial, honest and professional at all times
  - respect others’ points of view
  - be positive
  - be sensitive to cultural differences
  - don't SHOUT (writing in capitals seems like shouting)
  - stay on topic and let others have a say
  - don't 'flame' other contributors (flaming is attacking another or being harsh or hostile)

- **read and think before you write:**
  - understand the context before entering a discussion
  - ask yourself whether there is a good reason to join the discussion
  - think about what you want to say before you begin to write
• **be credible and responsive:**
  - be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent
  - know your facts and cite your sources
  - make your communications constructive
  - encourage constructive criticism and deliberation
  - keep your entries legal—plagiarism or any other cheating is not allowed
  - write clearly and proofread your message before you hit the ‘send’ button
  - if you make a mistake, admit it and be quick with your correction
  - when you gain insight, share it where appropriate.

**More information**

All Flinders University policies and regulations, legal responsibilities and behavioural expectations apply in the discussion forum.

To find out more about appropriate online behaviour, or ‘netiquette’, please read the student guidelines from Macquarie University: [online.mq.edu.au/docs/neti.html](http://online.mq.edu.au/docs/neti.html).