

# DISCUSSION BOARDS



Professor Ralf Becker is an inaugural Fellow of the Institute of Teaching and Learning. His fellowship project explored the potential outcomes and different engagement patterns of student groups with online discussion boards.

## WHY USE AN ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARD?



### Enhance Engagement

Share exclusive material and encourage collaborative responses



### Peer Learning

Let students respond; endorse or correct answers as necessary



### Build Community

Establish a supportive learning community beyond the classroom



### Reduce Emails

Ask students to reserve emails for personal matters

## MANAGING THE DISCUSSION BOARD

- **Be present:** monitor the discussion board on a regular basis
- **Ask students to check that their question hasn't been posted previously**
- **Emphasise that being wrong or unsure is an important step in learning**
- **Link the discussion board to the rest of your course (e.g. discuss interesting posts in your next lecture and/or finish the lecture with a question to discuss on the discussion board)**

### GROUP SIZE

Discussion boards allow communication to benefit a broader group; if an answer is available to the entire cohort rather than one individual, this will stop the same questions being asked again and again.



### GTA

Work with your GTAs to monitor discussion boards

Discuss expectations for answering different question types

Fit within a GTAs contracted work hours



For more advice on using discussion boards, visit the [Humanities Teaching Academy](#).