

HSC Forums



# Help Manual

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# Introduction to HSC Forums

## Welcome to the HSC Forums

The HSC Forums are a communication tool for students and teachers involved with the NSW HSC syllabus. The forums allow for open discussion, at the convenience of the users.

## Using this manual

This document is aimed at familiarising you with the functionality of the forums, and providing you with the necessary knowledge to use the forums to your advantage.

Use the Table of Contents to quickly refer to the Section that deals with the part of the Enhanced Forums you want help with.

Check out the Glossary if you find an unfamiliar term used or want some more information about a particular feature. Text in **Bold** is generally a term that can be found in the Glossary.

# Basic Use

## Introduction

This section provides help on the basic features of the HSC Forums. It contains instructions on how to **Read**, **Post** and **Sort** messages as well as how to add an **Attachment** to a message. It also details how you can personalise your **Options** (change your **Sender** name and add a **Signature**). See the Glossary for a full explanation of these terms.

Each Forum is displayed in the same way. Messages are listed showing information about:

- who posted the message (**Sender**);
- what the message title is (**Subject**); and
- the date the message was posted (**Date**)

also:

- if it is a **New** message (a Flag icon is displayed);
- whether or not the message has been **Read** (an opened or closed envelope icon); and
- whether the message has an attachment (an icon of a paper clip).

The screenshot shows the HSC Forums interface for the Mathematics section. At the top, there are logos for the NSW HSC and the Department of Education and Training. Below the navigation bar, there is a search filter set to 'show all messages with subject that contains anything this'. A table of messages is displayed with columns for 'New', 'Read', 'Sender', 'Subject', and 'Date'. The messages listed are:

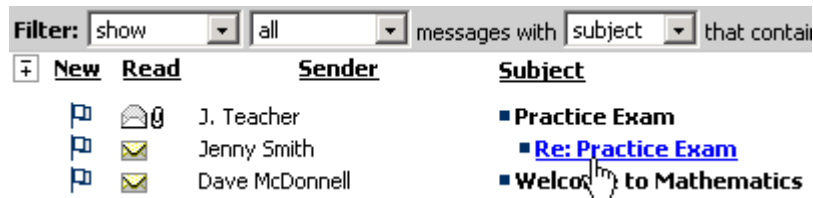
New	Read	Sender	Subject	Date
		J. Teacher	Practice Exam	18-MAR-02
		Jenny Smith	Re: Practice Exam	18-MAR-02
		Dave McDonnell	Welcome to Mathematics	18-MAR-02

Below the table, a message prompt reads: "Please select the message to view from the list above". At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with links for "Change Password", "Options", "Hide Forums", "Feedback", "Summary", "Management", and "Help".

## Read

Read (or view) a message within a Forum:

1. Point to the message you wish to view (depending on the **browser** you are using, you may see the text change appearance and become underlined to show a link).  
*You can point to any part of the message under the **Sender**, **Subject** or **Date** columns.*



2. Click the link.  
*The message will appear in the lower part of the screen.*

**Note:** The message envelope icon will not appear “opened” until you either *Refresh* the page or next visit the Forum.

## Post

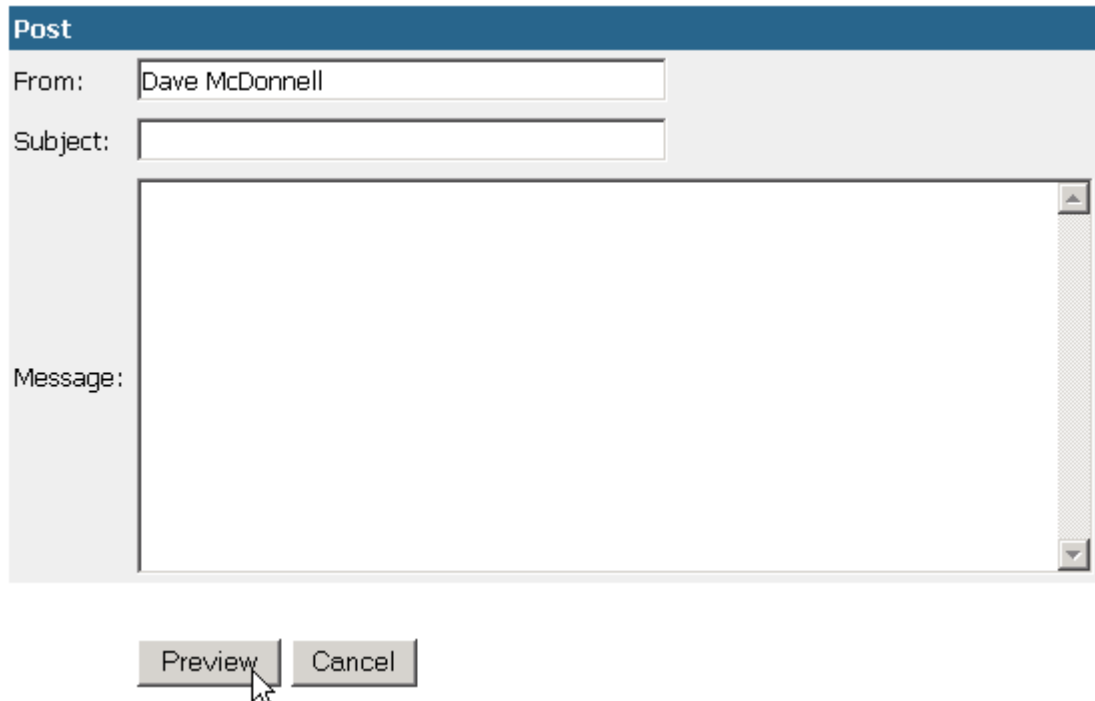
Post a **New message** to a Forum:

1. Click on the Post tab at the top of the page.



Continued next page...

A standard "Post" form will be displayed.



2. Enter details in the Sender, Subject and Message areas.  
*If you have set your Options (see **Options**) these will appear automatically.*
3. Click the **Preview** button
4. An overview of how the message will appear and a number of options are displayed:
  - **Post**
    - ♣ Post the message "as is" (you will not be able to delete or edit the message once it is posted) – **message posted**
  - **Attachment**
    - ♣ Add a file as an Attachment to the message – message **not posted yet**.
  - **Edit**
    - ♣ Make changes to the message before it is posted – you can edit and preview the message as many times as you like before posting – message **not posted yet**.

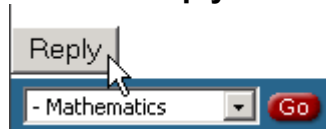
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- **Cancel**

- ✦ Cancel the posting of the message altogether – message **not posted** at all.

Post a **Reply** to a message:

1. First **Read** the message you want to reply to (see **Read**).
2. Click the **Reply** button located underneath the message.



*A standard "Reply" form is displayed with text automatically entered in the Subject and Message fields from the message you are replying to.*

A screenshot of a 'Reply' form. The form has a blue header with the word 'Reply'. Below the header are three input fields: 'From:' containing 'Dave McDonnell', 'Subject:' containing 'Re: Practice Exam', and 'Message:' containing '>Attached you will find a copy of 2001 Mathematics >practice exam.' The 'Message' field is a large text area with a scrollbar on the right.

3. Enter details in the Sender, Subject and Message areas (you can delete or replace some or all of the text that has been automatically placed in those fields).  
*If you have set your Options (see **Options**) these will appear automatically.*

Continued next page...

4. Enter your reply in the message field.
5. Click the **Preview** button
6. The same **Post**, **Attachment**, **Edit** and **Cancel** options are displayed as when you **Post** a **New** message.

## Attachment

Posted messages are able to have files attached to them. Attachments can be any type of file including images, Word, Excel, etc. You can tell a message has an Attachment by the appearance of a **Paper Clip** next to the envelope icon.



**Before** you add an attachment make sure you are ready to post your message (i.e. any editing has been completed to the message text) as the **Edit** option is not available when the Attachment button has been clicked.

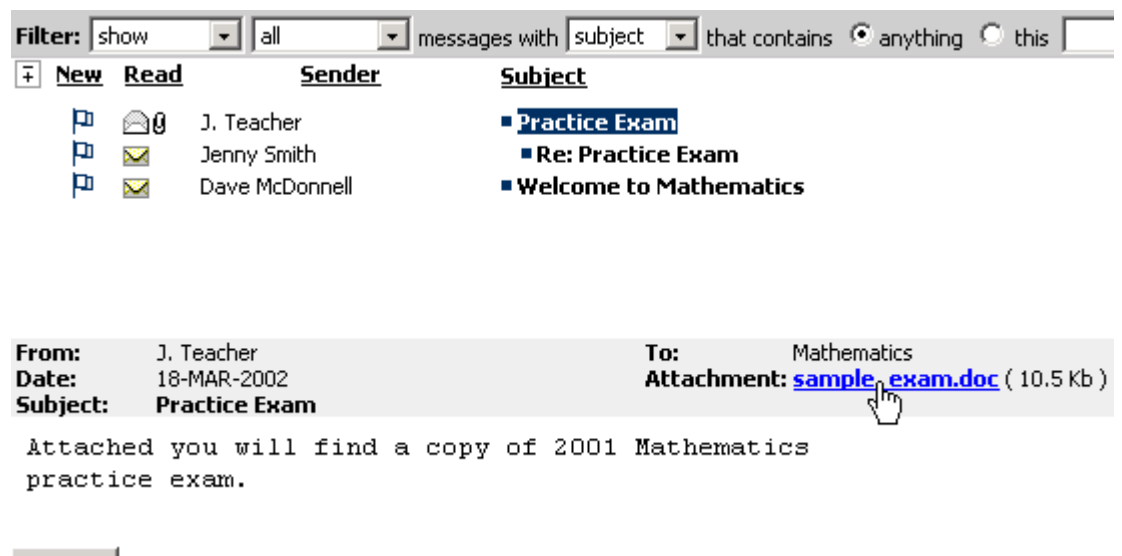
To **Add** an Attachment to a message:

1. First go through the steps to **Post** a message up to step 4 (see **Post** → **New**).
2. From the displayed options click the **Attachment** button.
3. Click the "Browse" button to locate the file you wish to attach.  
*This will open up a window that allows you to select the file from your machine.*
4. Click the **Post** button  
**Warning:** No preview is offered – the message will be **posted “as is”**.
5. A message will appear notifying that the “message has been successfully posted”. Your message will be added to a queue and will be available once approved by a forum moderator. Click [**Finished**] to return to the Forum.

You can also add an **Attachment** to a **Reply**. Go through steps to **Reply** to a message up to step 5 (see **Post** → **Reply**)

## View an Attachment

1. Click on the message that has the **Attachment** you wish to view.  
*This is denoted by the appearance of a **Paper Clip** beside the envelope icon (see “Attachment”, page 6).*
2. Point to the **Attachment** details in the **header** area of the message.  
These details include the size of the file. (See FAQ on download time estimates).  
*Depending on the **browser** you are using, you may see the text change appearance and become underlined to show a link*



3. Click the link to open the attached file.  
*Depending on the file type of the Attachment, it will either automatically appear in the lower part of the page or offer the option of saving the file to your computer.*

## Save an Attachment

1. Click on the message that has the **Attachment** you wish to view .
2. Point to the **Attachment** details in the “header” area of the message.  
These details include the size of the file.  
*Depending on the **browser** you are using, you may see the text change appearance and become underlined to show a link.*
3. To save the file to your computer, “right click” (for a PC), or “click – and – hold” (for a Mac) over the attachment link and select the “save as” option.

## Sort

Messages can be sorted (in ascending or descending order) by **Sender**, **Subject**, **Date**, **New** or **Read**. If you are “threading” (see **Thread**) messages, the sort criteria only gets applied to the initial message in each thread.

*Default setting is **New**.*

Sort by **Sender**:

1. Click on the **Sender** column heading.
2. Click again to reverse the order (ascending or descending).

Sort by **Subject**:

1. Click on the **Subject** column heading.
2. Click again to reverse the order (ascending or descending).

Sort by **Date**:

1. Click on the **Date** column heading.
2. Click again to reverse the order (ascending or descending).

Sort by **New**:

3. Click on the **New** column heading.
4. Click again to reverse the order (ascending or descending).

Sort by **Read**:

5. Click on the **Read** column heading.
6. Click again to reverse the order (ascending or descending).

When you next visit the Forum the messages will be displayed according to the last sort.

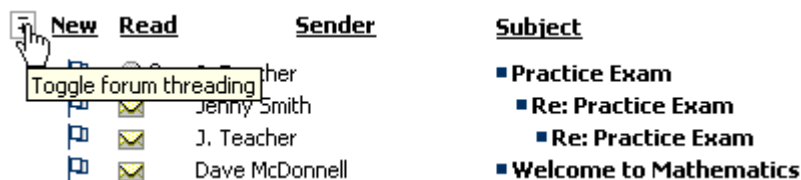
## Thread

Messages can also be displayed showing the **Thread** of the messages. Displaying by thread will group the messages hierarchically, with the initial message being the beginning of a thread and all replies being a continuation. Each reply will be indented beneath the message to which it was replying.

The **Thread** option displays the Forum in the format of:

- ♣ initial message – beginning of the thread
- ♣ and indents any **Replies** to that particular message directly beneath.

1. Click on the “plus/minus” sign on the top left hand side of the page (“toggle Forum threading”).



2. Click again to “toggle” – switch back and forth.

## Options

This is where you can personalise your messages. From here you are able to add a **Signature** to the bottom of each message you send without having to type it each time. You can also change the **Identity** (the name that appears as the **Sender** of a message) that is used by default for your postings.

Change **Identity**:

1. Click on the **Options** link at the bottom of the page.



Continued next page...

2. Check the second **Identity** option (the first option will use your name).

### Options

The following are your forums preferences. These may be changed at any stage.

### Identity

By default post my messages as:

Dave McDonnell

Dave

### Signature

Signature:

Add signature to my posts

Save

Cancel

3. Enter a new **Identity/Alias** (what you want to appear as the **Sender** of a message).
4. Click **Save** (or **Cancel** to not make any changes).
5. A message will appear notifying that "your options have been successfully saved!". Click [\[Finished\]](#) to return to Forum.

**Add Signature:**

1. Click on the **Options** link at the bottom of the page.
2. Enter the **Signature** that you want to appear at the bottom of a message.

Signature

Signature: Dave McDonnell  
Division of Information Technology  
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Add signature to my posts

Save Cancel

3. Check the option to “Add signature to my post”.  
*If this is left unchecked, the **Signature** will not be added.*
4. Click **Save** (or **Cancel** to not make any changes).
5. A message will appear notifying that “your options have been successfully saved!”. Click [**Finished**] to return to Forum.

# Advanced Features

## Introduction

This section provides help on the more advanced features of the HSC Forums to enable efficient and effective use of a forum. It includes instructions on how to:

- **Filter** your messages to restrict what is displayed;
- use an alternative, “**printer friendly**” way to view a forum by displaying the complete posting (including the message content itself), using the **View All** function;
- select which forums you wish to have listed by using the **Hide Forums** function; and
- use the **Summary** function to obtain statistics (number of – messages, new messages, unread message ) relating to all the forums you are a member of regardless of whether you have hidden them.

## Filters

You can **Filter** the messages to be displayed by selecting criteria from the drop down boxes and radio buttons (including keywords typed in the filter box) along the top of the Forum and then press **Go**. This temporarily restricts the messages displayed based on the selected criteria. If you are threading (see **Thread** – Basic Features) the messages, only the threads where the first message meets the filter criteria are displayed. Otherwise, all matching messages are shown.

Continued next page...



From the **Filter:** menu select the criteria:

1. From the drop down selection box  
**show**  
**don't show.**
2. From the drop down selection box  
**all**  
**new**  
**read**  
**unread**  
**attachment**
3. **messages with** from the drop down selection box  
**subject**  
**sender**  
**date**  
**message**
4. **that contain** radio button selection  
**anything**  
**this** – type a keyword in text area
5. Click the **Go** button.

**Note:** The next time you visit the forum your messages will be filtered based on the last filter criteria selected.

**Default:** The original filter criteria is:

**Show, all, messages with Subject, that contains anything**

## View All

**View All** messages of the Forum shows the complete detail of each message including the message text. You can use filter options (see **Filter**) to restrict messages displayed. Using **View All** does not allow you to **Reply** to a message, however you are able to view **Attachments**. Your sort options are carried through to **View All**.

**WARNING:** Viewing all of the messages and their content at once can take a long time to deliver depending on whether the messages are filtered and how many messages the Forum contains. The intent is for printing – offline, etc.

To **View All** messages showing complete detail:

1. Click on the **View All** tab on the top right corner of the page.



2. Select whether you wish to filter the messages
  - Use my current filter settings
    - ♣ The **Filter** options need to have been previously set (see **Filter**).
  - Do NOT filter the messages – display every message of the Forum.

#### View All

Please select the filters option to use when viewing all the messages in the **Mathematics** forum.

Use my current filter settings

Do **NOT** filter the messages



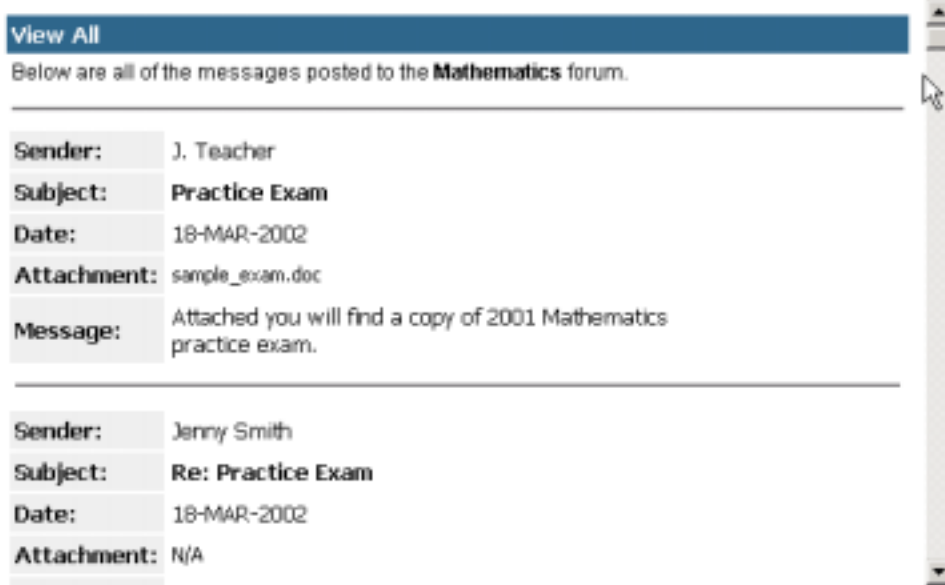
**WARNING:** Viewing all of the messages and their content at once **can take a long time** to deliver.

View All

Cancel

3. Click the **View All** button.
4. **Scroll** (using the scroll bar on the right hand side of the page) through the messages.

Continued next page...



5. View **Attachments** by pointing to the file name and Clicking the link.
6. Click the **[Finish]** link located at the very bottom of the messages (scroll to the bottom) to return to the Forums normal view.

Use **View All** to **Print** messages showing complete detail:

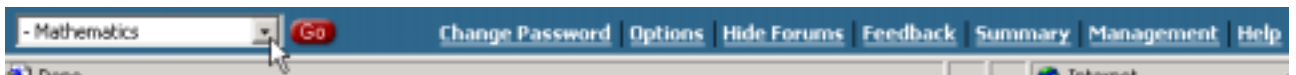
1. Follow steps 1 to 5 of "To **View All** messages showing complete detail:"
2. You are now able to print the complete listing of messages (minus any messages restricted by filtering), by selecting the print option of your browser.
3. Click the **[Finish]** link located at the very bottom of the messages (scroll to the bottom) to return to the Forums normal view.

## Forum

By default, all the forums you have access to will be listed in the drop down box at the bottom left hand side of the page, forums that you have hidden (see **Hide Forums**) will not show up in this list. This list will include all the current subjects you are enrolled in and any general forums that are available at the time.

Select a **Forum** from your list:

1. Select a forum from the drop down box located at the bottom left hand side of the page.  
*Most modern browsers will take you directly to the forum, but if this does not happen – step 2.*



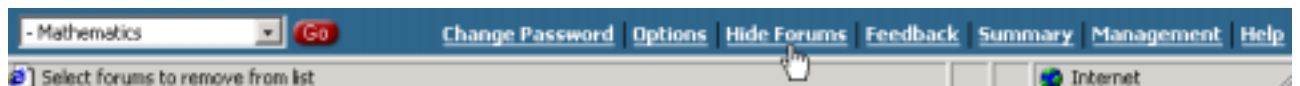
2. Click the **Go** button next to it.  
*The new Forum will now be displayed.*

## Hide Forums

You may find that your “list of available forums” contains forums that you do not wish to view all the time. You are able to select these forums and **hide** them from the list. The hiding of a forum does not affect your membership to the forum. In fact the only thing affected is the display of your list of available forums. Hidden forums may be un-hidden at any time.

**Hide Forums** from your list:

1. Click on the **Hide Forums** link at the bottom of the page.



2. Select the forum/s you wish to hide.
3. Click the **Save** button.

**Un-Hide Forums** from your list:

1. Select the forum/s you wish to un-hide.
2. Click the **Save** button

**Note:** You can't hide the "Technical Help" forum.

## Summary

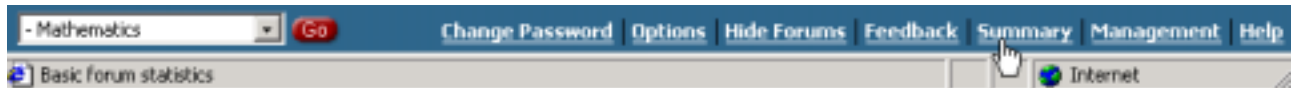
You are able to get a **Summary** of statistics for the forums you are currently a member of.

This **Summary** contains information on:

- how many **messages** a forum has;
- the number of **new** messages; and
- the number of **unread** messages.

**Summary** of the properties of a forum:

1. Click on the **Summary** link at the bottom of the page.



2. A new page is displayed showing the statistics

### Summary

The following is a summary of the properties of the forums you are currently a member of.

Forum	Messages	New	Unread
Mathematics	4	4	3

[ [Finished](#) ]



3. Click **Finished** to return to the forum.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I view a message?**

You may view/read a message by clicking on either the Sender, Subject or Date area of the message. The message will appear in the lower part of the page.

For further information on how to view a Message, refer to Section 2 page 3 of the document.

### **How do I reply to a message?**

You may reply to a message which has been posted to the forum by clicking the "Reply" button on the bottom right of the view message screen.

*You may have to scroll through the message to view the "Reply" button.*

For further information on how to reply to a message, refer to Section 2 page 5 of the document.

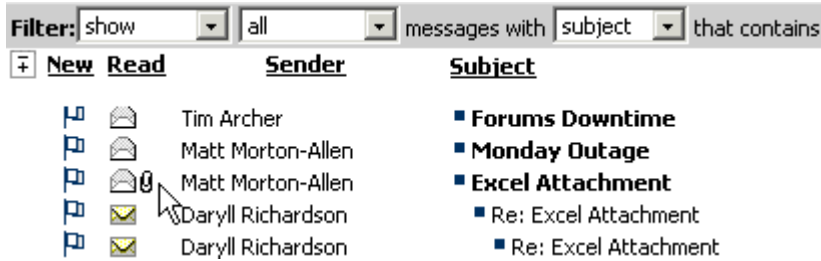
### **How do I post a message to the Forum?**

You can post a message to the forum by clicking on the "Post" tab on the top right hand side of the page. This will display a standard post form for you to compose your message in.

For further information on how to post a message to the Forum, refer to Section 2 page 3 of the document.

### **How do I view a message attachment?**

If a message posted to the forum contains an attachment a **Paper Clip** icon will appear next to the envelope icon in the message index.



Read the message with the attachment. The filename of the attachment will be listed in the **heading** section of the message. If you click on the attachment name you will be given the option to view or save the attachment, dependent on the settings of the browser you are using. Some attachments, such as images may display on-line within the message.

For further information on how to view a message attachment, refer to Section 2 page 7 of the document.

### How do I save an attachment?

To save the attachment, after clicking on the name of the attachment, you will be given an option of viewing or saving the attachment. Click on the "Save it to disk" option then click on the "OK" button. You will then be prompted to select the location where you would like the file to be saved. Some attachments, such as images, may display on-line within the message.

For further information on how to save an attachment, refer to Section 2 page 6 of the document.

### How do I add an attachment?

If you wish to post an attachment with your message you can do so in the preview screen by either entering the file name in the "Attachment" text box, or by clicking the "Browse" button to search for your file. If you do not want to send an attachment, leave the attachment option empty.

For further information on how to add a message attachment, refer to Section 2 page 6 of the document.

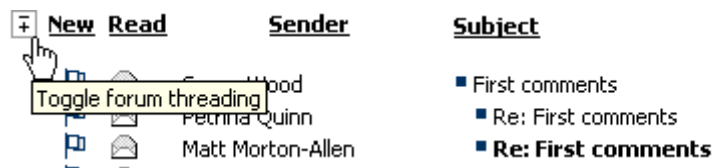
### What file formats can I send as attachments?

You can send files of any format to the forum as an attachment to a message. For example common files such as word documents, spreadsheets and databases can be attached as well as multimedia type files (images, sound and video). The ability of other users to open the files depends on the software on their machine.

### Can I rearrange messages in the message index?

You may sort the messages in the message index by Sender, Subject, Date, New or Read, in either ascending or descending order. You can do this by clicking the appropriate column heading. Click again to “toggle” switch back and forth between ascending and descending order.

The messages can also be displayed showing the Thread of the messages. You can do this by clicking the “plus/minus” sign on the top left hand side of the page (“toggle Forum Threading”)



For further information on how to rearrange messages in the message index, refer to Section 2 page 8 of the document.

### Can I change the “New” age?

No. the “New” age is set to 7 days by the system. It is not able to be changed manually.

### How long do messages remain “New”?

Messages remain new for 7 days. The 7 day period is set by the system and is unable to be changed.

### How do I save the contents of a forum?

Click on the “View All” tab on the top right hand corner of the page. A new form will be displayed with the following options:

- “Use my current filter settings” (*these are the filter settings that you have manually changed to filter out particular messages from the forum – see section 3, page 8*); or
- “Do **NOT** filter the messages” (*this reverts back to the default filtering option – see section 3, page 9*).

Click the “View All” button. A new page (HTML file) is displayed showing all the messages posted to the forum (the messages displayed are based on the filter options you selected). You may need to **scroll** down the page to see the entire contents of the forum.

To save this file select the Save or Save As option from the File menu of the browser you are using.

For further information on how to rearrange messages in the message index, refer to Section 3 page 15 of the document.

### **How do I view a forum offline?**

See previous FAQ "How do I save the contents of a forum. You are able to use the saved page (HTML file) to view the forum contents offline.

### **When I click on 'X' attachments 'X' program starts, how do I save the file?**

You will need to use the "Back" button on your browser to revert back to the original view of the message. Instead of clicking the attachment link, "right click" the link to display menu options (i.e. "Save target As", "Save link As", etc.). This will allow you to save the attachment onto your computer.

### **How do I upload a document?**

Uploading a document is the same as "Adding an Attachment to a message".

See FAQ "How do I add an attachment?", page 15.

### **How do I search for messages?**

Use the filter options to restrict the messages that are displayed. The filter options include restricting the display to only messages where the **sender** information contains a particular name, or the **subject** contains a particular word. The filter options are listed along the top of the forum. You select the required filter options and click the **Go** button. To return to the **default filter settings** select the following filter options:

- **show**
- **all**  
*messages with...*
- **subject**  
*that contains...*
- **anything**

For further information on how to filter messages, refer to Section 3 page 13 of the document.

### **How do you turn filters off?**

You are unable to turn filters off. Initially the forum is displayed using the default filter settings (**see** previous FAQ "How do I search for messages?").

# Glossary

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
Alias	This is a name you can use instead of the name issued to you by the system.
Attachment	A file that is attached to a message.
Browser	The software application that is used to access the Internet. Common browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape.
Date	The date the message was posted to the forum.
Edit	Change (edit) the message before posting to the forum.
Email	Email can be sent to your personal email address to notify you that a message has been posted to the forum.
Identity	Your identity is the name that appears as the sender of a message. You are able to use an Alias rather than the name the system has given you.
Link	A link allows you to jump from one page to another. You can normally tell it is a link by a change in color or an underlining of text when the cursor is placed over the area.
Member	A member of a forum.
Options	Allows you to change your identity and add a signature to your messages.
Paper Clip	An icon to show that a message has an attachment.
Post	A message is posted to a forum. In other words it is placed in the forum for other members to view.
Preview	Look at your message before you post it to make sure you like how it looks.
Printer Friendly	A compact way of listing messages for printing. The result is a single file that can be opened in your browser and printed using the print option of the browser.
Read	A read message is shown by an opened envelope icon, and an unread message be a closed one.

Refresh	The refresh option is part of your browser. This allows the page you are currently looking at to be reloaded so that any updates can be viewed.
Scroll	The scroll bar is used to enable the viewing of pages that are too big to fit on the screen. It is located on the right hand side of the browser.
Sender	The name of the person who posted the message. The sender may be using an alias.
Signature	You can have a signature automatically appear at the end of any messages you send.
Sort	Sort the messages.
Subject	The subject heading of a message.
Thread	This shows the original message first, then lists any responses directly below with an indent.
Toggle	On / Off.