

# UBC Creative Writing Forums

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## User Guide and Manual

### How to Register

Registration is only open to UBC Creative Writing faculty, staff and students enrolled in the BFA or MFA programs.

To sign up, visit the forums at: <http://forum.creativewriting.ubc.ca>

Click the "Sign Up" link at the landing page. You should then fill in all of the fields on the registration page.

#### **YOU MUST USE YOUR FULL NAME AS YOUR DISPLAY NAME.**

Please include capitalization and the space between first and last name (for example, 'Jules Verne').

As you move from field to field you will be alerted to any problems with the information you have entered. Please **do not** use the same password you use with your email account – this is extremely insecure.

The Registration Question answer is "UBC".

When you have filled in the form, click 'Create My Account'.

We will manually approve each registration. Once you have registered you won't be able to use the forums until you have been approved. This usually takes less than a day unless you are registering on a weekend or holiday.

### Signing In and Out

#### Signing In

Once you have signed up for an account, you can sign in by visiting the website. You will not be able to view any pages until you are signed in.

From here, you should enter your username and the password you used when you registered. If you tick the "Remember Me" box you will not have to sign in when you

visit the community in future. This can be very useful, but **should not be used** if other people have access to your computer or if you are using a public computer.

When you are ready, click Sign In.

### *Forgotten Password?*

If you have forgotten your password, you can click the "forgot your password" link on the sign in page below the password box. This will take you to a page where you can enter your email address, and the system will send you a link to reset your password.

Note that if you locked your account by typing in the wrong password too many times, you will still need to unlock your account before you can use your new password.

### **Logging Out**

To log out click the "Sign Out" link at the top of the screen from any page. If you are using your personal computer, you do not need to log out unless you are sharing the computer with other people.

## **Getting Started**

1. Once logged in you will see several sections (depending on what you are enrolled in). If you are enrolled in online workshops, you will see a section titled 'Workshops' first, otherwise it will read 'Program Communication'. Other sections include 'Student Initiatives', 'Staying Connected / Alumni' and 'Discussion Topics.'
2. Each section contains a number of forums. These are groups of topics, organized by subject.
3. Click the name of any forum to read topics related to the forum title.
4. Click **your name** at the top right corner of any page and explore the links under this. You can update your profile and adjust your settings. You can also add an avatar – a picture which will represent you online.
5. The Envelope icon takes you to the personal messenger, which allows you to send private messages to other students and faculty members.

## **Forum Purpose & Expectations**

Students and faculty should regularly check the Program Communication section of the forum for program announcements and updates. All important information is

posted on the forum, including information about scholarships, registrations, policies, employment and more.

## Topics and Forums

### Forum Wayfinding & Navigation

To enter a forum, click on its name.

When viewing the forums, there are icons shown next to them which indicate the status of a forum, and if it has unread posts or not.



This indicates that there are posts which you have not read contained inside this forum, or one of its sub forums.



This indicates that all of the posts contained in this forum and its sub forums have been read.

### The Topic List

Within each forum there are a list of topics. Just like forums, each topic has a marker to indicate the type of topic it is:

- A regular topic with posts you have not read. The name of the topic will also be bold if it has unread posts.
- ★ This is a topic which you have participated in, with no new replies since you last read it.
- ★ This indicates that you have previously replied in this topic, and there are new replies since you last read or replied to the topic.

### Special Types of Topics



This icon indicates an "Announcement" - Announcements are not regular topics, because members cannot reply to them. They are simply important news or information which should be read.



This icon indicates a topic which has many members participating and replying.



Topic that has been moved into another forum.



This indicates that a topic has been locked, and can no longer be replied to.

To enter any topic, click on its name.

## Understanding the typical topic display

We can see by the icon (see image below) that this is a regular topic with no unread posts. The topic title is '*Video: How to Read a Poem with Karen Solie and Sheryda Warrener*'. To the right we see the topic author, Sheryda Warrener. Clicking the topic title will open the topic; clicking the author's name will show the author's profile. There have been 6 replies to the first post in the topic, meaning that there are 7 posts in total in the discussion. It has been viewed 119 times.

The last column, on the far right, shows the most recent post in the topic. Clicking the date will take you directly to that post. Clicking the member's name will show his or her profile information.



There may be more than one page of topics, if this is the case, you will see page buttons at the top and bottom of the page.



## Adding a Topic



To add a new topic, press the "Start new Topic" button. This may not be available for all forums. In forums where you cannot create a topic you will see "You cannot start a new topic" in place of the button.

Once you press this button, you will view the **post editor**. Not unlike a small word processor on the website page, this allows you to write and format your work before submitting it.

You give your topic a title and then type your content into the large text area. Click the 'post new topic' button when you're ready. You can even preview your post before sending it.

The icons are very similar to those found in a word processor – you can bold, italicize, underline, make lists and even paste directly from Word documents.

## Create New Topic

Topic Details

**Content** Poll

**Title** REQUIRED

**Tags**

Type tags separated by commas.

REQUIRED

Source **B** *I* U ~~S~~ **A** Size

This is a test. |

Drag files here to attach, or [choose files...](#) Insert other media ▾

Notify me of replies

Cancel **Submit Topic**

## Attachments

You will be able to upload attachments to your message.

To start, drag a file from your computer's desktop or press **Choose Files**. A box will appear for you to select the file or files on your computer that you want to attach. Select the file or files you want to upload. You can select more than one file at a time by holding Ctrl (on Windows) or Command (on Mac) and click on the files.

Once you have selected your files and clicked "Open", they will begin uploading. If there are any errors uploading the files, you will receive an error message, otherwise, you will see the attachments appear.

### *Managing Attachments*

Regardless of which uploader you use, once the files are uploaded you will see them on your screen. By default, all attachments are added to the bottom of your message,

however, you can add any attachment to a particular section of your post by pressing the "Add to Post" link. This is useful especially when you want a photograph to appear in the body of your post rather than having it show up as a file attachment to be downloaded. Your attachment will appear as a tag containing the name of the file you uploaded. You will not be able to see it until you preview or post your message.

If you wish to remove an attachment and have it not appear in your post, simply press the "**Delete**" link.

### **Files allowed**

We allow almost any type of file to be attached to a message, including images, documents from Word and both Celtx and Movie Magic Screenwriter. We can add new file types on demand.

#### *Restrictions:*

Total upload limit: 75 MB per user.  
Individual file upload limit: 5 MB per file.

### **Taking part in a discussion**

Once you or another member has created a topic of discussion, you are able to reply to posts and take part in the discussion.

Replying is quite simple – at the bottom of the page there is a blank box titled ‘Reply to this topic’. When you click in this box, you will see the text tools which also appear when you are creating a topic. You can then type your reply directly in the box and when you are finished, click ‘post’.

### **Quoting**

This is an extremely useful thing. In a long discussion, often a post you wish to reply to is not the most recent post in the conversation. To ensure people know what you’re referring to, use the ‘Quote’ feature.

If you click the word ‘Quote’ directly below the member’s post you wish to refer to, you’ll see that their original words are copied into the reply box at the bottom of the page. You can edit and remove extraneous text from the quote to just highlight the material you want to refer to.

### **Quick Quote**

What if you only want to quote a little? You can simply highlight with your mouse the text you want to quote (by clicking and dragging your cursor over the text) and then click the pop-up 'Quote this' button. This will select only the highlighted text.

### **MultiQuote**

You can also quote several different people simultaneously by clicking the + button next to the 'Quote' text under each person in a discussions comments. When you do, a small button will appear at the bottom right side of your screen reading 'Quote R posts' (where R is the number of posts you selected). Click it to fill the reply window with the selected posts.

## **Messages**

The Messages feature can be used to have private **conversations** with other members. This is like a private email system, but there are some important differences. The most important one is that conversations between users are like mini-discussion forum topics rather than individual emails. So when you message another member and have a conversation, all replies are stored with the original message..

Conversations can have more than one member, and members can be invited into a conversation at any point. Keep in mind that once a member has been invited to join an existing conversation he or she will be able to view the entire conversation.

Remember, if you think of each conversation as your own private discussion forum topic, it will make much more sense than if you think of it as a conventional email exchange.

### **Using Messages**

To access it, click the envelope icon on any page at the top right of the screen. This will pop up your inbox and you can see recent messages. You can also compose a new message, or if you want to see your complete inbox, click 'Go to inbox' at the bottom of the pop-up window.

The features of the messenger are fairly straightforward and should be familiar to anyone using a web-based email system.

### **Some points to note**

Because this isn't regular email, there are a few distinctions to highlight

*Deleting conversations*

To delete a whole conversation, select the checkbox beside the conversation, then click the trash can icon that appears near the bottom of your screen.

If you started the conversation, this will remove the conversation from your list, and lock it for everyone else - nobody else will be able to make replies to the conversation, but they will still be able to read it until they also delete it.

If you did not start the conversation, this will remove the conversation from your list and remove you from the conversation - you will not be able to make any more replies, but others will still be able to continue the conversation without you, and see your previous replies.

### **Adding participants to a conversation**

You can also add more participants to an existing conversation. At the top of the message window you'll see which people are part of the conversation. To add someone, click the + icon that reads 'invite a member'. As you start typing the member's name, the system will fill it in for you.

## **Your Settings**

A selection of useful settings follows. Note, this is not all of them. Please explore the options, including managing your file attachments and student profile.

### *Manage Followed Content*

This section allows you to change notifications for topics and forums that you have 'followed', enabling you to receive emails for any changes or new posts in specific areas of the site.

### *Account Settings:*

#### *Email Address and Password*

You can use these tools to change the email address and password associated with your account.

#### *Display Name*

Please do not change this unless we've made an error in spelling or you change your given name for all courses at UBC. We require full names, but you do not have to have your legal name if you use a different variation of your name as a student. No screen names or nicknames are allowed.

## Other Site Features

Feel free to click the 'Activity' tab on any page to explore the various tools for sorting the information the forum displays to you. This section shows you new posts in the forums you're part of, and allows you to customize streams to display even more filtered information.