# WGU Community Moderator Training Non-Faculty

This course is designed for WGU community moderators who are not WGU-faculty. This training provides an overview of our student community platform called WGU Connect, as well as an introduction to moderator best practices in alignment with WGU policies and procedures.

To complete this course:

- Carefully review each section.
- Complete the assessment at the end of the course.

Time to complete: Approximately 60 - 90 minutes

# Introduction and Learning Objectives

# Welcome to the WGU Student Community

We are excited to introduce you to our new student community platform, WGU Connect! WGU Connect provides a complete toolkit for groups to manage student activities within a private campus network.

# **Learning Objectives**

At the end of this training, participants will have met the following learning objectives:

- Identify the community's purpose, goals, and target audience.
- Understand how to login/access the platform.
- Understand the features and functionalities of the community platform.
- Demonstrate how to use moderation tools provided by the platform.
- Demonstrate understanding of best practices for adding content to a group discussion.
- Understand where to locate policies for handling various types of content (e.g., spam, hate speech, inappropriate content).

# Accessing the Community

# Accessing the WGU Community

To access the student community, go to <a href="https://wguconnect.wgu.edu/(opens in a new tab">https://wguconnect.wgu.edu/(opens in a new tab</a>).

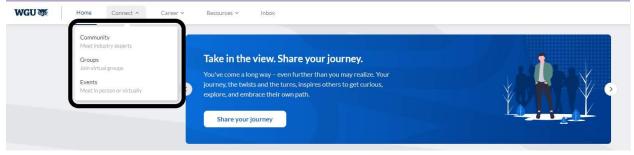
You may also receive an invitation to join the community from a community administrator. This will be sent to your WGU email.

# **Exploring the Connect Tab**

# Using the Connect Tab in the Student Community

Students will use the tools found on the Connect Tab to help build a supportive community and connect with others who share their interests.

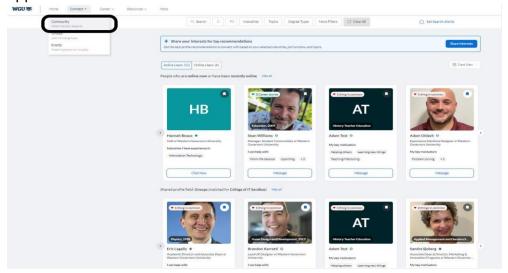
There are three sections within the Connect Tab. Select the Connect Tab to access the drop-down menu, as demonstrated in the following image:



- Community a space for students to connect and network with other members of the community.
- Groups a space for students to access their course and college groups.
- Events Students can access and RSVP for WGU community events.

# Community

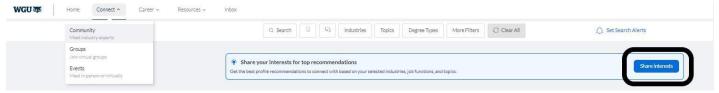
The Community page is the space to meet people and forge connections with WGU students, staff, and alumni. As shown in the following image, user profile cards with potential connections and helpful user information are displayed. If users are online, the button below their name will allow you to request to chat in real-time. If users are not online, you will see the message option instead. Your message will appear in the user's inbox.



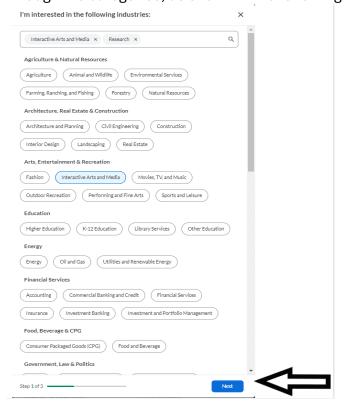
# Creating your user profile

To get started, add some information to your user profile. This will help others get acquainted with your interests. The following image is an example of this section:

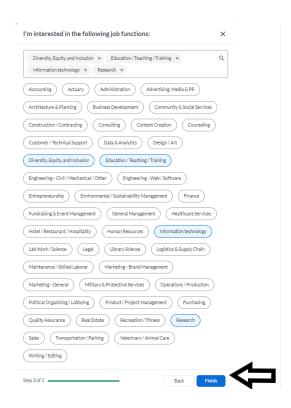
First, select the 'Share Interests' Button.



Next, select your interests by using your mouse to add topics. The items you select will appear in the field at the top of the box. You can remove interests by using your mouse to select the X or type in keywords to find what you are looking for. There are three screens to select your interests. When you are finished with a screen, select next and make any additional selection you wish to add as you move through the categories, as shown in the following image:



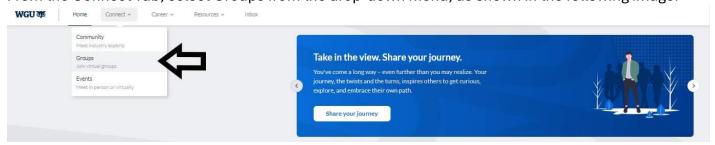
Once you have made your final selections. Select the 'Finish' button as shown in the following image:



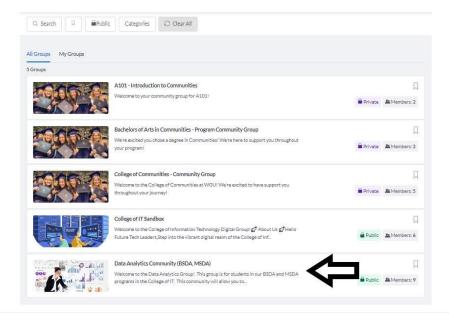
## Groups

On the Groups page, students will find virtual groups that they can join to connect with their courses and college. As a moderator, you will also join these groups. Students can post and reply to others in the group area. As a moderator, you will monitor the content of the group and respond to posts as needed to answer questions and clarify information regarding WGU content. We will discuss this in more detail in the next section.

From the Connect Tab, select Groups from the drop-down menu, as shown in the following image:



From the main page, users can join the groups of their choice. As shown in the following image, the arrow points to the field of the group. Select a group to go to the group page of your choice.

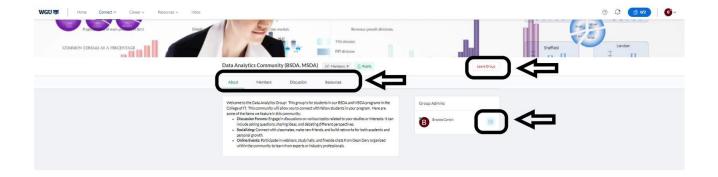


Select the join button to join and interact with members of this group. This page also displays information about the group in the About section as demonstrated in the following image.

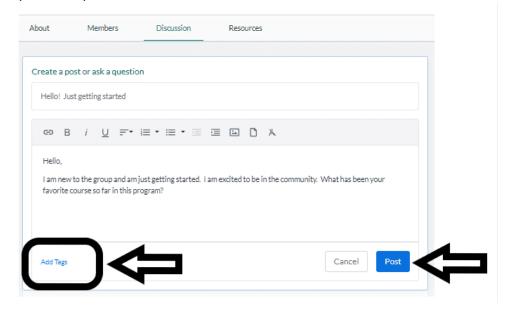


# Interacting in a Joined Group

Once a user has joined a group, more options become available. Users can see other group members, participate in group discussions, and view group resources. In the following image, note the new tabs: Members, Discussion, and Resources. By selecting the Leave Group button, users can leave the group. Users can contact group admins with any issues by selecting the envelope icon.

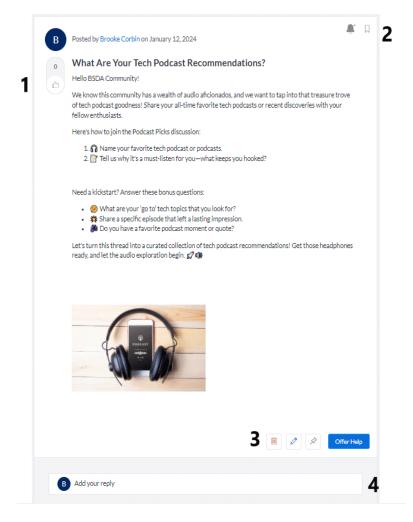


Course Moderators will spend most of their time in the discussion section of the group. The following image is a post that has not yet been submitted. Note the availability to add a post title, message body, and add tags. It is not mandatory to add tags but can be helpful to other users when searching for specific topics.

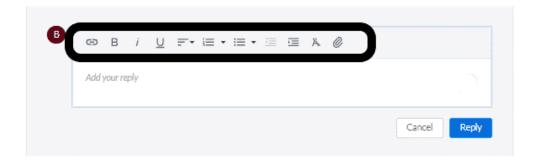


The following image is an example of a published post. Note the standard icons that allow other users to interact with the post. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

- 1. There is a thumbs-up icon located on the top left side of the message that can be selected to upvote a post.
- 2. In the top right corner, there is a bookmark icon that can be selected to bookmark a post for personal review.
- 3. There are icons to delete, edit, and pin a post. Moderators can edit and delete posts but it is not a typical action unless there is an issue with the content that violates the code of student conduct. The Offer Help button sends the author of the post a notification that you are willing to collaborate or discuss the topic further. This can be used as needed to reach out to the student if needed.
- 4. There is a field below the post to add a reply.



Once the reply field is selected, the field will expand into a section to add text, links, and attachments as applicable. This is shown in the following image:



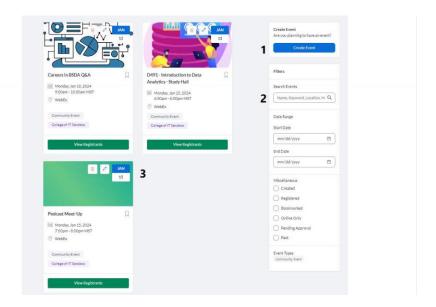
#### **Events**

The events section of the Connect Tab is a space for events that are meant for anyone in the community to attend. Please note, course moderators will **not** be creating events from the Connect Tab. For detailed instructions for course group event creation, please move forward to the next section.

# **Events Page Overview**

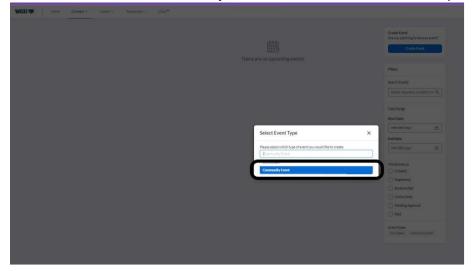
In the proceeding image, note the different aspects of the Events page. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

- 1. In the top right corner, a button can be selected to create events.
- 2. Events can be located by using the search fields on the right-hand side of the Events page.
- 3. Upcoming events will also be displayed on the other side of the page.

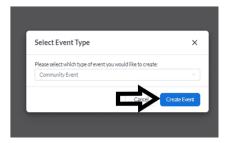


# **Creating Events**

As shown in the proceeding image, once the Create Event button is selected, a new window will appear to select the event type. At this time, all events will be a Community Event vs the option of a Livestream. Select Community Event to move on to the next step.



Next, select the Create Event button as demonstrated in the following image:

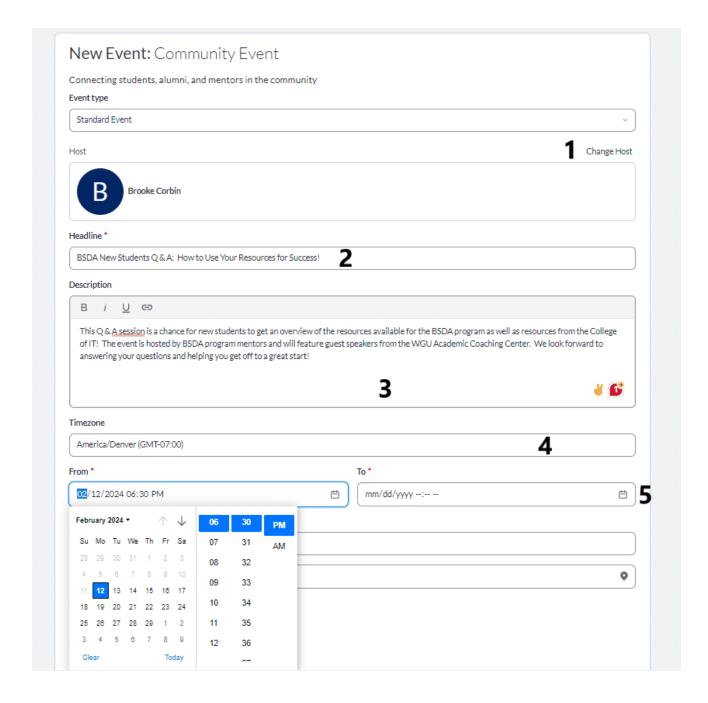


# Submitting Information for a New Event

Several areas in the New Event form need to be completed before it is ready to submit. This section discusses the areas of the form with corresponding images of each section of the form.

The proceeding image shows the next steps needed to create an event. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

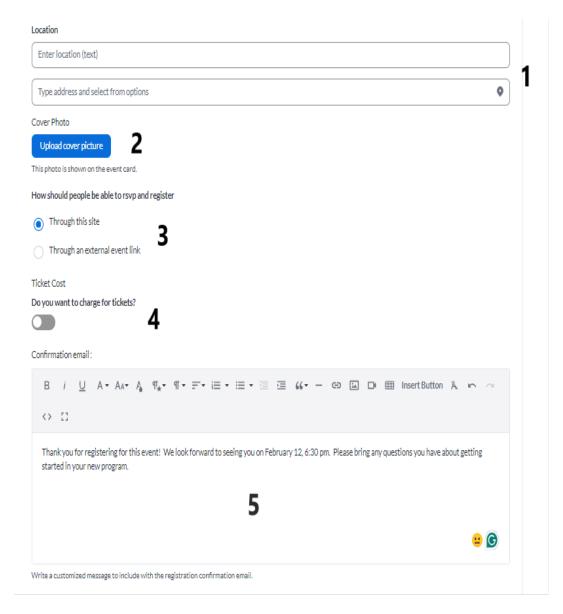
- 1. The Change Host link allows the user to change the name of the host from themselves to another user. This can be used if you are creating an event for someone else.
- 2. In the Headline Field, the user adds the name of the event. It is recommended to add specific information about your event in this area. For example, BSDA New Students Q&A: How to Use Your Resources for Success! is more descriptive than BSDA New Student Q&A.
- 3. In the description area, the user adds specific information about the event.
- 4. The timezone field can be changed but the setting is defaulted to GMT as this is the standard time zone for WGU students.
- 5. The From and To area allows the user to select the date and time of the event.



Scrolling down to the next steps of creating an event, there are additional areas that need to be completed. The following image shows the next steps needed to create an event. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

- 1. The location fields can be left blank since meetings do not take place in a physical space.
- 2. It is recommended to upload a cover photo for your event. Selecting the Upload cover picture button allows the user to select a photo to upload from their computer.
- 3. The radio button for how users can RSVP and register defaults to the 'Through this site' option. The 'Through an external event link' should only be selected if the user needs to be directed to another site to RSVP/ register.

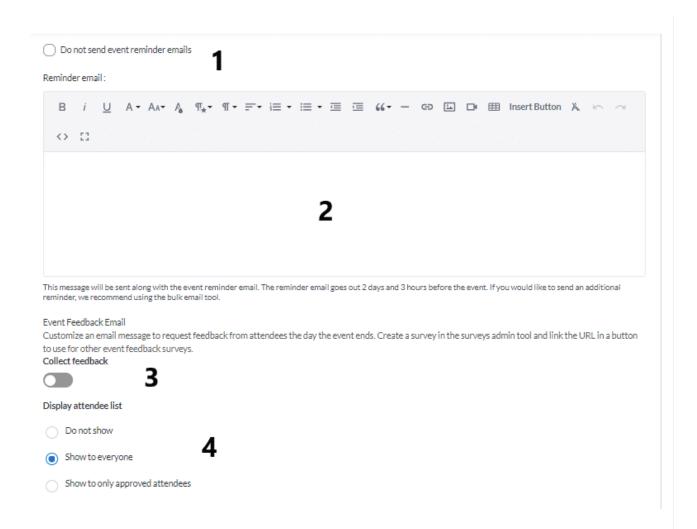
- 4. The dial for charging for tickets defaults to the off setting. It does not need to be changed as WGU does not charge students for events.
- 5. This space allows you to compose a confirmation email that is automatically sent to users once they register for the event.



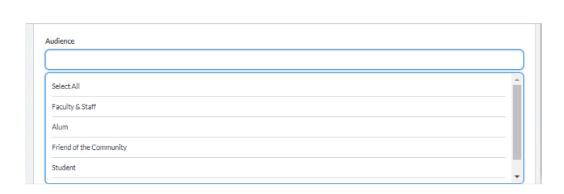
Scrolling further down to the next steps of creating an event, there are additional areas that need to be completed. The following image shows the next steps needed to create an event. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

- 1. Select this radio button if you do not wish to send event reminder emails.
- 2. In this space, users can compose an event reminder email. This is recommended as it can help increase event attendance. Users will receive this email 2 days before the event and again 3 hours before the event.
- 3. This dial can be switched on to send an email to collect feedback from your event. In your composed email, a survey link would need to be included for event participants to complete. This email is sent after the event has ended.

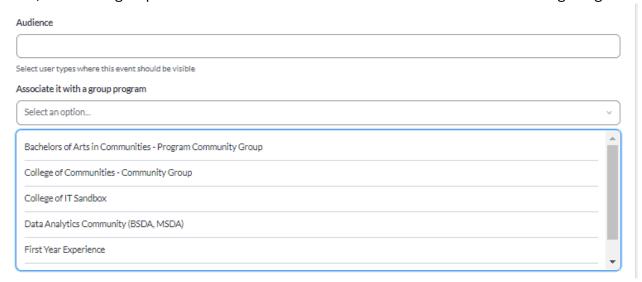
4. In this section, users can choose how they want their attendee list displayed for their event.



The following image demonstrates the next field of the event creation space. Select the audience that will see this event:

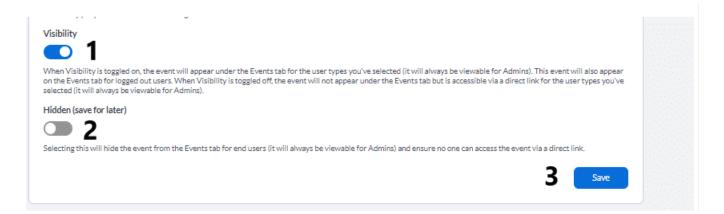


Next, select the group associated with this event as demonstrated in the following image:



Finally, select the visibility of the event. The following list describes the area that corresponds with the numbers in the image:

- 1. Visibility should be toggled to the active position.
- 2. You can keep an event hidden and change the setting when you are ready for the event to be viewed by users.
- 3. Select the save button to finish creating the event.



# **Understanding Your Inbox**

# **Locating Your Inbox**

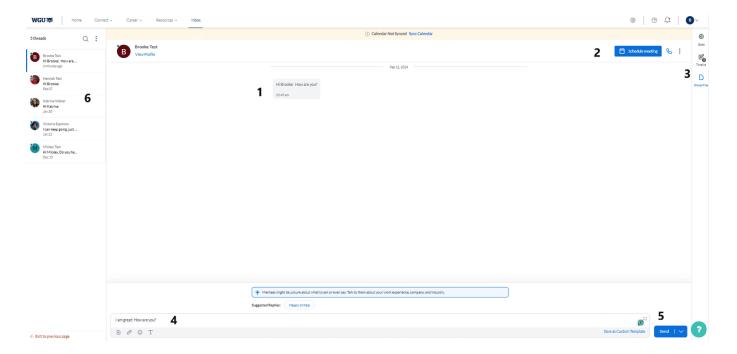
Your inbox is a place to message and chat with other users. The inbox is located on the top ribbon of the page of the site. This ribbon is static and can be accessed at any time. The following image demonstrates the location of the inbox on the page. Notice the red colored dot next to the word inbox on the tab. This indicates a new message has been received.



# **Using Your Inbox**

Your inbox has several areas to explore. The proceeding image shows the different areas of your inbox. These are labeled in the image and correspond with the following list:

- 1. Any new message threads will automatically display in the main reading pane area.
- 2. This area allows the user to contact the user displayed in the main reading pane area. Select the Schedule Meeting button to set a date and time to meet with the user. The phone icon can be selected to call the user. Lastly, the three vertical dots can be selected to display options to archive the message and to report/block the user.
- 3. You can share goals, notes, and files within each thread.
- 4. At the bottom of the thread is a space to compose a new message.
- 5. When you are finished composing your message, select the Send button to deliver the message.
- 6. In the top left corner of the message box area, all existing message threads can be accessed. Your selected message thread will appear in the main reading pane.



# **Adding Discussion Content**

# Adding Content to a Group: Why Moderator Posts are Important

As a subject matter expert in your group, providing additional content to your community adds a great deal of value to the community experience for WGU students. By posting additional content, you are calling attention to resources and ideas that students might not otherwise have encountered.

Consider the following elements regarding content creation:

- Will the content generate interest and conversation among group members?
- Is the content evergreen? Please note, this is not mandatory but content that is no longer relevant should be updated or deleted to ensure all posted information is accurate.
- Does the content provide information or resources that will help students?
- Is the content aligned with the community's purpose?

## **Types of Content**

Listed below are some of the main types of content that can be used in a community group discussion.

**Welcoming:** These posts are helpful to get a community group going. Welcoming posts give users a first impression of the group and is a great opportunity to restate the community purpose, values and rules.

**Storytelling**: Share or ask for stories that emphasize the student journey. This can include interviews with WGU staff and students, graduation stories and alumni to name a few. Stories help build emotional connection and understanding in the community.

**Questions:** Questions that call for a response from users encourage engaged dialogue and sharing ideas. Users have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences with one another. Encouraging students to post their own questions can create peer to peer engagement.

**Education:** Helps users learn, create awareness around WGU resources and think about concepts in new ways

# **Content Examples**

The following messages are examples of the different types of content.

#### Welcoming:

Welcome to the Night Owl 101 Community! Please introduce yourself to the group!

Here are some things to share:

- Your program
- Your state
- Current interests
- What are you most excited about as you get started at WGU?

## Storytelling:

Hi all! It's a new term (yesterday) for me, and all of you, too! As I was sitting down to register for my courses and get things organized, I evaluated my goals and put a lot of thought into what I want to conquer in this term. 6 months feels like an eternity, but as someone who's starting their 4th term, I can say that it goes by in the blink of an eye!

So, my first goal for this term is to be intentional about the DAYS that I focus on school. I want to set specific days that are free from work and school obligations so that when I'm "off", I am truly able to unwind and relax.

Does anyone else want to share?

#### **Questions:**

Happy Monday everyone! I am going to be changing my study space this week. Does anyone have any good recommendations for maximizing a space for studying? Tips on keeping the kids and pets away or organizational tips to making adjusting the space for OA's easier?

#### **Education:**

Career development is a crucial aspect for you as you pursue your college degree.

We want to give you the tools and resources to help guide you as you navigate the professional world.

Take a look at some of our key resources:

- 1. Career Coaching
- 2. Resume Development
- 3. Weekly Workshops
- 4. Employer Connections

Check out the Career and Professional Development Center today and share your favorite resource below!

#### When to Post Content to the Discussion

Posting content to the discussion feed can keep the flow of engagement from students going! Consider the following components when deciding when to post:

#### **Peak Activity Times**

Posting content during times when users are logged in to the community is an effective way to gain engagement. Users can respond to your post in real-time and fresh content during peak times can maintain discussion feed activity.

#### **Time Sensitive Information**

When a post is time-sensitive, it is important to add content that is relevant to the time-sensitive event. An example of this can be a post centered around a specific holiday. If the post is too early or too late, the relevance of the post is lost.

#### **Driving Urgency Behind a Call to Action**

A slightly different situation when a post is time-sensitive is when users need a sufficient window to interact with a post. An example of this is asking users to contribute topics to an upcoming live event. A sufficient window of time would be needed for students to add responses. Posting this type of content too early might diffuse the urgency of user engagement while posting it too close to the event would not give users sufficient time to fulfill your call to action.

## How to Add Content To a Group Discussion

To compose a post, select the Discussion tab within the group. At the top of the feed, select the text field below the title called, Create a post or ask a question as demonstrated in the following image:

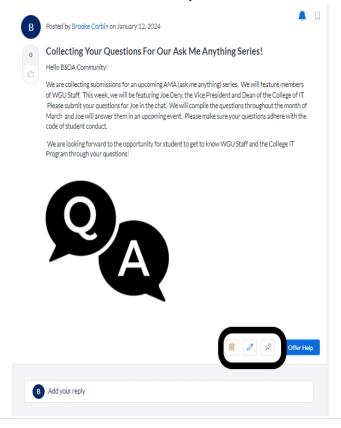


The space will expand once the text field is selected to offer rich text features. The following image is an example of a blank post. Note the labeled fields in the image that correspond with the following list:

- 1. Post title This is a required field for the topic of your post.
- 2. Post body This is a required field to add to the body of the post message. Note that links, images, and attachments can be added to the post. There are also rich text options to use as needed.
- 3. Add Tags This is not a required field but is recommended to allow users to search for posts via topic.
- 4. Once the post is completed, select the Post button to publish your content.

# Editing, Deleting, and Pinning Published Posts

Once a post has been published, there will be administrative options available to delete, edit or pin a post to the top of the discussion feed as demonstrated by boxed icons in the following image:



# Accessibility

# The Importance of Accessibility

Student communities are a place to bring WGU students together in a way that is both inclusive and accessible. It is crucial to incorporate elements of accessibility in the platform. In this section, we will discuss the elements of accessibility and how they can be implemented by WGU connect moderators.

# What is Digital Accessibility?

Digital accessibility refers to the design and development of digital content, platforms, and technologies in a way that ensures equal access and usability for all individuals, including those with disabilities. It aims to remove barriers that may prevent people with disabilities from accessing, interacting with, and benefiting from digital resources and technologies.

# Key Aspects of Digital Accessibility

Perceivable: Digital content should be presented in ways that can be perceived by all users, regardless of their sensory abilities. This includes providing alternatives for non-text content such as images, videos, and audio.

Operable: Users should be able to navigate and interact with digital interfaces using a variety of input methods, including keyboards, mice, touchscreens, and assistive technologies like screen readers and voice commands.

Understandable: Content should be presented clearly and understandably, with consistent navigation, predictable interactions, and understandable language. Users should be able to easily comprehend the structure, purpose, and functionality of digital elements.

Robust: Digital content and technologies should be compatible with a wide range of assistive devices, browsers, and platforms. They should adhere to established standards and guidelines to ensure interoperability and future compatibility.

## Accessibility by Category

The following items further define accessibility components by each category.

#### **Images**

Images are used in posts as well as events that contain a presentation. Please consider the following recommendations when using images in the community:

- In posts and presentations, images should be relevant to the topic.
- Images should have alternative text to describe them whenever possible or be marked as decorative if they do not add to the content of the post or presentation.
- Images should be free of writing, whenever possible.
- When using images in presentations such as an event, briefly describe the image to the audience.

#### **Written Comments**

Written comments are used in our student forums and community feeds as original posts as well as replies. These recommendations apply to all areas of the community where there is written text.

- Written comments should be easy to understand. Stick to an 8th-grade reading level or lower.
- Avoid jargon and unnecessary technical language.
- Avoid unrelated metaphors, idioms, or culturally specific examples.
- Define unusual words and acronyms.

#### **Presentation Slides**

Presentation slides are often used in events to guide and illustrate the topic. These can also be linked as resources in forum posts. Please utilize these recommendations when sharing presentations in the community.

- Include white space.
- Use headers.

- Use lists.
- Have simple colors and fonts.

When hosting a community event where slides will be shown, please contact the main WGUC administrator of your community for further accessibility guidance.

# Things to Avoid

When composing a post or reply, please avoid the following elements to help maximize accessibility.

- Avoid using all capital lettering.
- Avoid using large blocks of italicized or bolded text.
- Avoid underlining words for emphasis.

## How to Respond if a Student Chooses to Self-Disclose an Accessibility Issue

WGU respects students' privacy and maintains confidentiality regarding their disability status and accommodation needs. Students are free to self-disclose their accessibility information at their discretion. If a student chooses to self-disclose this information within WGU Connect, moderators should not edit or delete the content. If a student is seeking assistance with an accessibility concern, moderators can reply to the student with the appropriate resources including referring them to the WGU Accessibility team (accessibility@wgu.edu) and the Student Handbook article regarding digital accessibility: WGU Digital Accessibility Policy - Academics(opens in a new tab) (opens in a new tab).

# Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

# Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at WGU

A diverse online community has a wide variety of people with different backgrounds and interests. The more varied the members, the better!

Diverse communities include differing perspectives. This means not only diversity in ethnicity but also in ideas, thoughts, values, etc. Perspective can vary from person to person which makes for an interesting discussion when combined into one group or forum. Diverse online community members will have different perspectives on the same topic, and this can lead to more enlightening discussions.

#### WGU DE&I Vision Statement

WGU is endeavoring to be the most inclusive university in the world. We look to lead the national conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I). Most importantly, we endeavor to achieve this by collectively living our cultural beliefs to be the most innovative, student-centric university.

# Alignment with WGU's Missions and Key Results

Our vision statement is intentionally bold, inspiring necessary change across the university to meet the needs of employees and ultimately our students and to realize our key results. The statement underscores our mission, vision, cultural beliefs, and key results. It is designed to help individuals internally and externally better understand and align themselves with the WGU mission. This statement answers why we are committed "to changing lives for the better by creating pathways to opportunity."

## Fostering DE&I in our Student Community

When engaging in the WGU Student Community, be mindful that our discussion topics should include all of our students. Asking them to share their thoughts on topics is key to encouraging varying perspectives. We can all learn from one another and will not always agree. Encouraging respectful discourse in WGU Forums and feeds and asking for feedback from our students can help us build a community where everyone feels included and comfortable connecting and sharing.

For additional resources, please see your main community administrator.

# **Student Conduct Expectations**

Our students are expected to review and abide by the WGU Student Code of Conduct as well as the WGU Community Guidelines. As stated in the Student Handbook:

Any Student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct may be subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in this Code of Conduct: Unprofessional conduct, including Harassment, threatening, bullying or verbal abuse of any member of the WGU Community by any means (conduct, speech, written notes, electronic communication, etc.), or use of threats, profanity, and demeaning or intimidating comments; Failure to conform to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the <a href="Teachers College Professional Disposition and Ethics">Teachers College Professional Disposition and Ethics</a>, the <a href="Leavitt School of Health Code of Professional Conduct and Dispositions">Leavitt School of Health Code of Professional Conduct and Dispositions</a>, and similar standards of professional conduct associated with other WGU field experience programs.

Students may view the complete Code of Conduct and the WGU Community Guidelines using the links below.

WGU Student Code of Conduct(opens in a new tab)

WGU Community Guidelines (opens in a new tab)

WGU User Terms of Service (opens in a new tab)

# **Student Wellbeing Information**

## Our Commitment to Wellbeing

WGU is dedicated to optimizing support for student wellbeing across the continuum of each student's academic journey at WGU, in service to students in all WGU Programs; knowing there is a direct connection to student wellbeing and academic success.

Early identification and proactive support for students facing wellbeing barriers translate into proactive removal of barriers to their academic success and significantly improve academic outcomes!

WGU Student Wellbeing Services provides free resources aimed at helping students navigate personal, family, and financial challenges that can affect their academic progress and other responsibilities.

## What to do When There is a Student Wellbeing Concern:

Our students lead full and complex lives. WGU offers wellbeing resources to assist students along the continuum of their academic journey with all their wellbeing needs. Students can visit the <u>Student Wellbeing Services(opens in a new tab)</u> page for full details of the resources listed below. This link can also be given to students directly.

Student Wellbeing Services offers the following resources:

- Mental health counseling and wellbeing services
- Crisis support 24/7
- Connections to local resources
- Peer-to-peer support community

If students post about experiencing self-harm, suicidal thoughts, abuse/violence, or any threat to their wellbeing, please direct students to the Student Wellbeing services website or share the dedicated access line:

#### **Student Wellbeing Services**

1-877-824-0555 Call. Chat. Anytime. Anywhere.

Free Student Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Crisis Support 24/7!

# Training Conclusion: What's Next?

As we grow and evolve in the community, we will introduce new community elements and features to our students. Stay tuned for updates as we progress through future stages of the community launch. Thank you for completing this training! We look forward to working with you in the WGU Connect

Community. We are happy to assist with any questions yo to wguconnect@wgu.edu(opens in a new tab).	ou have about the platform. Please reach out