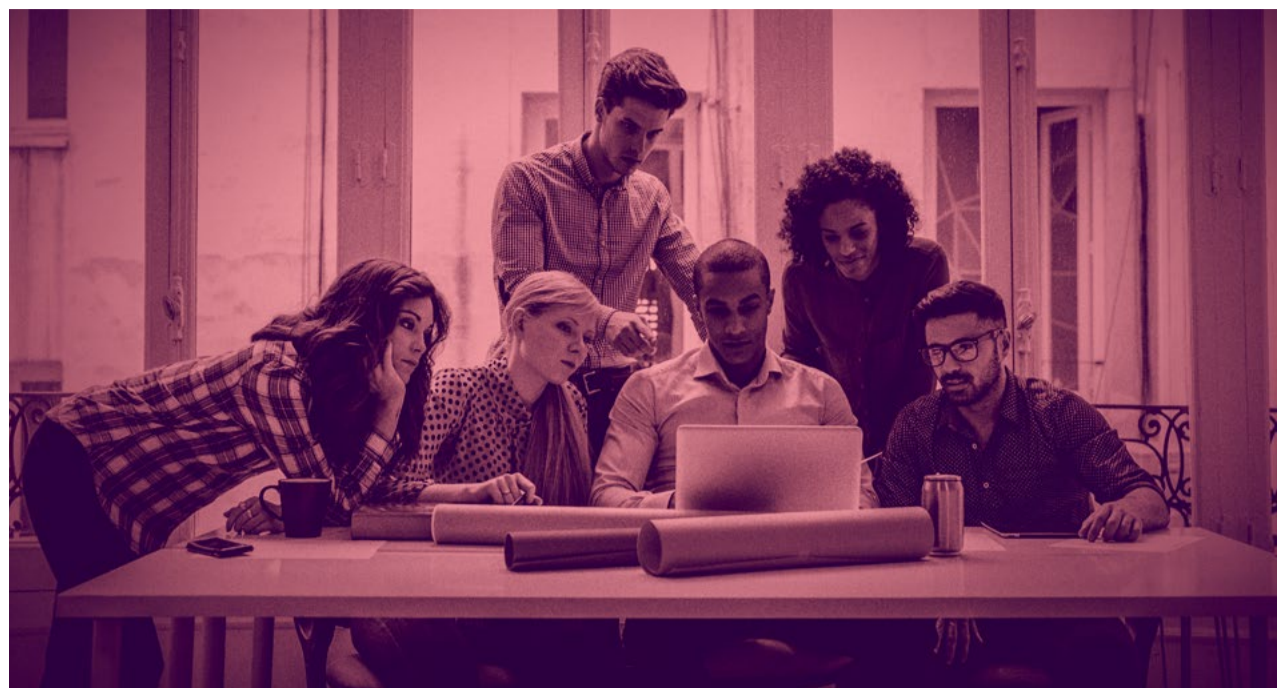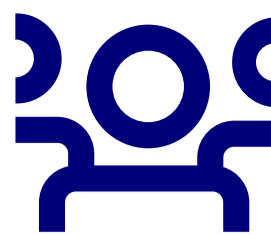# 4

Groups

This is an asynchronous communication system based on the Groups application. It gives a team's members access to different types of forums adapted to different communication dynamics. It can be used to create distribution lists, discussion forums and Q&A forums. It also offers the possibility of tagging or highlighting subjects, sharing Drive folders and files or sharing calendars, among other functions.
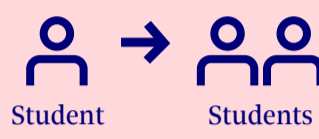
Groups are a very useful communication tool for holding course-focused discussions, and also as a formal communication channel in project management and motivating work groups.
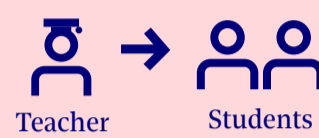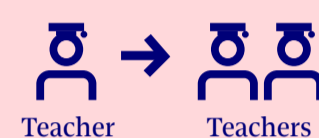
Tool involved:

Groups

Who do we use it with?

Student	→	Students
Teacher	→	Students
Teacher	→	Teachers

How do we do it?

Initiator

1. Defines or decides the purpose (teaching use).
2. Decides the most suitable type of forum.
3. Creates the group.
4. Selects and invites participants.
5. Publishes the first subject or message.
6. Takes part in accordance with his or her role and the type of forum.
7. Administers the group.

Participants

1. Search for the group or receive an invitation from a group.
2. Join the group.
3. Take part in accordance with their role and the type of forum.

Things that we can do

❯ **Discussion environment for student teams.**
A permanent communication channel in the form of a forum to hold discussions or share information about collaborative learning activities and projects. This use is related with methodologies such as PBL (project-based learning), role playing or group assignments.

❯ **Newsletter.**
A distribution list is created to publish a selection of news and current affairs resources prepared applying teaching criteria. Students enrolled on a programme or a series of courses can subscribe to it and receive the news items in their mailbox.

❯ **Online debates.**
Discussions between students about one or several issues proposed as a learning activity. By creating a forum, the moderator and the participants can use functions such as open topics, highlight messages and tag interventions depending on the purpose, methodology and debate dynamic applied.

❯ **Q&A forum as support for an internship community.**
Agents with different roles and backgrounds share knowledge and experience around a cross-disciplinary activity. For example, a practicum environment shared by internship centre tutors, academic managers, faculty and students. The participants ask questions that are answered by the other agents, so that each one contributes information related with their outlook or field of expertise.

❯ **Q&A forum with input from an invited expert.**
Students subscribed to the group ask questions about a particular subject area that are answered by an expert or by a team of experts. For example, an expert in artificial intelligence (AI) and bots presents a text or a video about the applications of AI, and a group of students studying for their bachelor's degree in Teaching ask questions about their possible educational uses.

❯ **Discussion forum for faculty linked to teaching projects or processes.**
A forum with one or more conversation topics as a permanent communication channel for holding discussions or sharing information in teams that work collaboratively for different purposes. For example, faculty and technical staff involved in interdisciplinary projects, research professors who generate a paper within a research group, deans and UOC faculty who work together in designing programmes, etc.

Remember that...

❯ The groups enable tools and environments to be created that complement the learning activity, but under no circumstances can they replace the classrooms' communication tools (noticeboard, forum, debate), defined in line with the UOC's teaching activity model.

❯ The use of groups must be adapted in order to carry out specific activities that require their communication functions, avoiding redundant uses or which overlap with the classroom's communication channels.

❯ The groups enable participation by people from different areas, including from outside of the UOC's teaching activity. Distribution of sensitive data, documentation or learning resources without appropriate permits and licences should be avoided.

Other uses it can be combined with

- Cloud work space
- Time planning and management
- Creating and editing tools and resources

More information

Google Suite. *A best practices website on the use of Google apps created for the affiliated teaching staff.*

Product-driven learning. *Advice, guides and other resources for using G Suite in the work place.*

R&I   eLearn Center