Getting Around Sakai

What is Sakai?

Sakai is a web-based "collaborative learning environment" built to support formal and informal collaboration, ranging from fully online and face-to-face courses to faculty committee work and student clubs. The system provides a range of communication and information management tools designed to facilitate interactions with content, between instructor and students, and peer to peer.

Sakai is a toolbox for teaching, learning, and collaboration. You can pick and choose any combination of tools in it that fits your needs. You don't have to know all of them to get started. See the next section for a matrix of Sakai tools and their functions.

NOTE: Logging into Sakai differs based on the modified version of Sakai used by the institution.
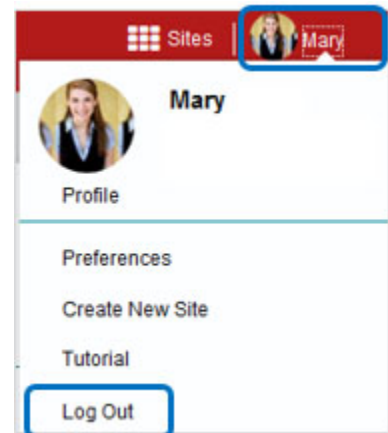
How do I access Sakai on mobile devices?

Sakai is mobile friendly. You may access Sakai using web browsers on your mobile devices.

NOTE: Although Sakai is mobile responsive, we highly recommend that any items that are time sensitive or grade dependent (such as tests and assignments) be completed or submitted from a full-sized, Ethernet connected device.

How do I log out of Sakai?

Once you are done using Sakai, click on the "Log Out" button of your profile icon in the upper right corner of your screen, and then **close your browser** and all open tabs.

How do I access my course or project site?

1. **Home Button**
   Once you login to Sakai, you will be placed in your "**Home.**" This is the main area for important system announcements (MESSAGE OF THE DAY), Sakai site settings, and aggregated notifications of your site messages and events.

2. **Favorite Sites**
   Your favorite sites show up in the top red banner area for easy access. Click on any of them to go to the site directly.

3. **Active Sites**
   You can access your active course and project sites by clicking on the "Sites" button on right edge of the top banner area. Click the star to the left of a course or project site to make it your favorite. If you want to see and organize your favorite course sites click "Organize Favorites." You will also see action buttons which allow you to create a new site and set up your Sakai preferences.
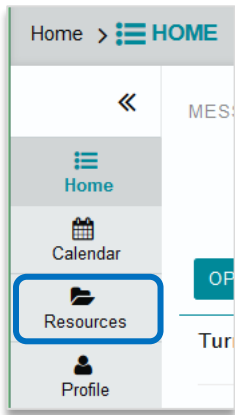
4. **Profile Icon**
   Click your profile icon to access your Sakai profile management page. You also have access to pages to set up Sakai preferences, create new sites, and look up tutorials.

5. **Breadcrumb Navigation**

6. **Message of the Day**
   Important system announcement. Messages about system outages or maintenance schedules will show up here.

What is "Resources"?

Resources in your "Home" area is your personal space to store, archive, and manage documents, media files, and any other types of files. All files in this space are private and only accessible by you unless you choose to share them with others. The functionality of this **Resources** tool is the same as the one on regular Sakai sites.

NOTE: To learn how to use the **Resources** tool, please refer to the **Resources** tool tutorial.

Teach, Learn and Collaborate with Sakai Tools

| Tools	Task 1 Notify students of class activities and change of schedules	Task 2 Share materials such as readings, presentation slides, lecture notes, etc.	Task 3 Share multimedia materials such as Youtube videos, recordings, websites, etc.	Task 4 Post assignments, grade them and send them back to students with comments	Task 5 Post and release grades	Task 6 Conduct engaging online activities such as discussions, group work, and projects
Overview	Display a brief course description and aggregated notification of announcements and messages					
Announcements	Notify the whole class in public	Share spontaneous resources, not everything	Share spontaneous resources, not everything			
Calendar	Add entries from other tools to the Calendar					
Messages	Notify the whole class, groups, or individuals privately	Share specific resources with some individuals or groups, not everything	Share specific resources with some individuals or groups, not everything			
Forums		Share resources related to forum activities	Share resources related to forum activities	Set up discussion activities, grade forum posts and send the grades to the Gradebook		Great platform for asynchronous discussion activities for the whole class and private groups; Also profile pictures (if added) are present with posts
Chat Room						Simple tool for synchronous chatting activity
WebEx						Virtual videoconference with audio, video, desktop sharing, text chat, and more

Tools	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6
	Notify students of class activities and change of schedules	**Share materials such as readings, presentation slides, lecture notes, etc.**	**Share multimedia materials such as Youtube videos, recordings, websites, etc.**	**Post assignments, grade them and send them back to students with comments**	**Post and release grades**	**Conduct engaging online activities such as discussions, group work, and projects**
Syllabus	Post course objectives, list of activities, class schedules, and policies	Share master list of readings and textbook information				
Lessons	Add open/close dates for lesson pages	Link to files in the Resources tool, embed YouTube videos, and more	Link to files in the Resources tool, embed YouTube videos, and more	Link to assignments, quizzes, and forum discussions		Add comments and polls; create student pages; set up conditional release of learning activities
Resources		YES! Store, manage, and share everything here!	YES! Store, manage, and share everything here!			
Assignments		Link to files relevant to assignments	Link to files relevant to assignments	YES! Grades and comments can be released to students	Yes. Students can see grades of assignments here	
Tests & Quizzes				Some quizzes can be automatically graded. You can manually add comments and override grades.	Yes. Students can see grades of tests and quizzes here.	
Gradebook				Comments can be added here.	Yes. All grades aggregate here to calculate the final course grade. Comments can be added too.	

Overview of Best Practices for Using Sakai Tools

PLEASE NOTE: This table provides only an abbreviated look at commonly used tools and their recommended best practices. For the complete best practices along with step by step instructions for each tool, please refer to the appropriate page listed in the Table of Contents.

Announcements	• Set the Options in the Recent Announcements box on the Homepage to show 2 listings or the last 10 days. • Set Options to also show at least the first 100 characters of the body of the posting. • Use a meaningful but short title. • Use "**red**" or another bright color and **bold** formatting to stress critical points.
Assignments	• Use the "Accept Until" to provide students with a few extra days to submit assignments (they will be tagged as "late"). • Select Points for the grade scale option for uncomplicated integration with the Gradebook. • Use the e-mail notification option to be notified when submissions are posted, and to alert students when new grades are posted. • Use the "In/New" column to quickly see if you have new submissions. • Use the Additional Information to release notes to specified users at a specified time or to leave yourself a note for future semesters. • Automatically generate an originality report from Turnitin.com for each submitted assignment. **NOTE:** Be sure to review our Best Practices for using Turnitin.com.
Forums	• Students will not be able to view a Forum that does not contain at least one topic. • When creating a **FORUM**, leave the short/full descriptions blank. • When creating the **first TOPIC** of your course, the short description should read: *"Please read the full description"* o The "full description" should then include: *INSTRUCTIONS: To post, click on the Topic title (e.g. Chapter One Questions) to access the topic and then click the "Post New Thread" button*. • Once students become accustomed to the Forums tool you will not need to include this text. • Use the Statistics option within the Forums tool to review student participation and view all posts by an individual student. • Use the Watch feature to be notified when new posts are made.
Gradebook	• Consider releasing Course Grades to students only during specific points in the course when it is useful, e.g. Midterms and Finals. • Drag the items left and right to customize the order of your Gradebook. • Check "All Grades" for a spreadsheet view of all student grades.

Lessons	• Enter text directly into Lessons pages if possible.
	• Use the "Add Content Link" option to:
	    o Link to a file previously uploaded to Resources
	    o Upload a new file into Resources and link to it
	    o Add a link to the URL of an external resource
	• Embed YouTube videos on the page with video control buttons
	• Use "Hide this page from users" option or "Hide page until following date" to prevent student viewing of a module you are actively drafting.
	• Files in Resources must be "shown" to students in order for links to work.
	• Use the "show/hide" scheduling option to save time.

Messages	• Messages are always sent to the recipients' Messages tool in Sakai. • Send a copy to a recipients' official email by selecting the option to "Send a copy…" when drafting a message. • If you only want to receive messages within the messaging tool in Sakai (and not in your email), change the setting for "Allow sending copies to recipients' email address(es)" to "No. " • Set a policy regarding use of Messages at the start of the course. • Make sure students are either regularly checking Messages in YOUR course or that they set up the forwarding to be notified by email. • If desired, you may opt to tell students that you'll send all messages to their E-mail Account.
Resources	• To control students' access, use "hide/show" or schedule when the resource will be shown to or hidden from them. • It helps to organize your content into folders that represent complete lessons (e.g. all chapter 1 content in a Chapter 1 folder in Resources). • Use the "Move" option to take a resource out of one folder and place it in another. • To reorganize folders, use the Reorder function under the actions menu for the course-level folder.
Syllabus	• Post your syllabus directly in the Syllabus tool for easier on-the-fly changes. • Make a multi-part syllabus for easy editing and viewing without the need to download, edit, and re-upload the document. • Consider giving students a one-point quiz on the syllabus to ensure they've reviewed it. This will also familiarize them with the Tests & Quizzes tool. • **Always use the Paste-from-Word button to copy text from MS Word into the Rich Text Editor.**
Tests & Quizzes	• Use the Print option to save a PDF file of your exam. Students are unable to print exams. • Under the Grading settings, **ALWAYS** select "Students' identities can be seen by graders." • Under "Assessment Organization," the "Random access…" and the "Each question on its own page" options are **STRONGLY** recommended. • Under the "Feedback Delivery" setting, the "release feedback on a specific date" option is recommended. • At a minimum, always provide Student Responses and Correct Response in feedback. • In a timed assessment, set the retract date to at least the duration of the test past the due date (e.g. if a one-hour exam is due at 5 p. m., set the retract time to no earlier than 6 p. m.).

Overview	• Add a brief course description in the Site Information area. • Attract student attention by adding visual materials such as images and videos in the Site Information area. • Glance at aggregated notifications of announcements, messages, and forum posts to keep track of course activities in Sakai.
Roster	• View list of students and their emails. • View student profile pictures before meeting them face to face in the classroom. • Profile picture is optional in Sakai system and can be added by accessing the Profile tool on the top right corner of Sakai interface.
Site Info	• Add and remove site tools using Edit Site Tool tab. • Customize tool visibility and order by using Tool order tab. • Import materials from other sites to reuse them in the current site. • Edit site information.
Site Statistics	• Glance at data about site visit, students' activity, and events in this site. • Check detailed report on specific course activities and events. • Generate custom report on an individual student to track learning behaviors and plan intervention accordingly.

Work Flowchart of Course Site Setup

Home: Worksite Setup

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Create New Course Site

Import from other sites

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Revise old content

Create new content using Syllabus, Lessons (NEW), Resources, Assignments, and Forum tools

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Set up assessment using Gradebook, Assignments, and Tests & Quizzes tools

⬇

Set up communication using Announcements, Calendar, Messages, Forums, Meetings, and Chatroom tools

⬇

Publish the Course Site