Sakai Student Guide

A guide to navigation and tools

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Starting Out in Sakai
You can access Sakai for your online and web-enhanced classes by going to
https://sakai.northweststate.edu/portal. There are also links to Sakai on the Northwest State
Community College homepage and within your myNSCC account.

Recommended web browsers:
    Microsoft Internet Explorer 10 or newer (www.microsoft.com)
    Mozilla Firefox (www.mozilla.org)
    Google Chrome (www.google.com/chrome)

Your Sakai account will use the same User ID and Password as your MyNSCC account. If you do not know
your Student ID or password, please contact the Technology Help Desk to have it reset.

Contacts:
For questions or problems with Sakai, you may contact the Teaching & Learning Center at
distancelearning@northweststate.edu or by phone at 419-267-1428. You may also stop in office A101E, inside the library.

For technical problems, you can contact the Technology Help Desk by email at
helpdesk@northweststate.edu or by phone at 419-267-1461. You may also stop in A223, on the second floor of A-building.

The Welcome Screen
The log-in area is in the upper right corner of the Welcome Screen.
This page will show you the Message of the Day. This can inform you of downtime, maintenance, events on campus, or important upcoming dates.

Log in / Log out
To log in to your Sakai account, enter your Student ID and password at the upper right.
Once you are logged in, your user menu will appear in that area. Click on your name to find the log out button. When you are finished working in your class, always log out and close the browser window to keep your course work secure. Sakai will automatically log you out after an hour of inactivity. After 30 minutes, a popup window will appear, alerting you that you will be logged out. You may either click “Keep my Session Active” on that message or click on any link or tool in Sakai to remain logged in.
All of the sites you have access to will be listed in the Sites menu, organized by term. You can click on the star icon next to a course number to mark that class as a favorite. Favorite sites will appear in the top bar. You can click on the star icon again to un-favorite a site and unpin it from the top bar.

If you are registered for a course that is not appearing in your sites menu, please be patient. It can take some time for enrollment information to be processed. Also, course sites will not appear in Sakai until your instructor publishes the course. Some instructors may not choose to publish the course until the first day of the semester. If your course site is not appearing before the first day of the semester, please be patient and check back. If it is not appearing on or after the scheduled start date, please contact your instructor, the Technology Help Desk, or the Teaching & Learning Center.

Navigation Pane
On the left side of the screen is the Navigation Pane. This is where you will find all the tools available to you in each course or project site. For your classes, these tools may include Syllabus, Course Content, Assignments, Tests & Quizzes, Messages, and Forums.
Breadcrumbs

Near the top of the page, you will see Breadcrumb links showing you where you are in the course. Clicking on the name of the page or tool you are on will reset the page back to the original view. For example, if you are viewing Course Content and have clicked on several different links, clicking on Course Content in the breadcrumb trail will return you to the table of contents. If you have entered any information on a page, but not saved it, this will discard your work.

Your browser’s back button does not work within Sakai tools. It will normally bring you back to the previous tool you were using. If you wish to remain in the current tool, it is better to use the breadcrumbs, not the back button.

Sakai Home

The Home page is your private work area. On the Overview page, you will see the Sakai Message of the Day and the Information Display. On the right, you will see Calendar, Recent Announcements and Message Center Notifications. These combine information from all your classes to let you see at a glance any new messages or forum posts, site announcements or calendar events. With the Calendar, please be aware that not all classes use the calendar and not all due dates may be posted. This should not be the only thing you check for assignments or tests.

The navigation pane for your Home page has several tools that you can use to personalize your account.

Membership

The membership tool will let you control your membership in different course or project sites. When you click on Membership, you will see a list of all your current sites.

Certain sites are joinable, although classes will not be. Click on Joinable Sites near the top. This will show you list of sites that you are able to join. Click Join below the site name to be added to that site. You can currently join various sites in Sakai, such as Research & Writing Support and the Online Learning Readiness (OLR) Assessment. In the future, more sites may be available to join.

If you are able to remove yourself from a site, there will be a checkbox before the site name. Mark any that you wish to be removed from and click Unjoin at the bottom of the page. NOTE: This should not be used to drop academic classes. You must drop classes through MyNSCC or you will still be financially responsible for the class and receive a grade.

Calendar

The calendar on your Home page will show you the events from all sites you have access to. This may include due dates for assignments, tests, and other activities. However, not all classes use the Sakai calendar. No events on the calendar does not necessarily mean that nothing is due. You will need to review each class to know your due dates.
If you would like to see a larger, more detailed version of the calendar that appears in the upper right corner of your Home page, click on Calendar. Here, you can view your combined calendar by day, week, month, year, or as a list of events. You can also add events to the calendar. These events will be private to you, not visible to anyone else in Sakai.

Click on Add to create a new event. Enter a title, date and start time. You can optionally set duration or end time and add details. Below the Message area, you can set frequency for reoccurring events, type of activity and location. Click Save Event to add this to your calendar.

**Announcements**
The Home overview page shows the most recent announcements for all your classes. It normally displays only announcements for the past 10 days. To view older announcements, click on Announcements in the navigation pane. You can click on each announcement’s subject to view the full message. Once you’re in an announcement, you can navigate using the buttons at the top and bottom left – Next, Return to List, and Next.

**Preferences**
Under Preferences, you can control several different options. The first tab is Notifications, which lets you control how often you will receive automated email notifications from Sakai. These notifications can be sent by the instructor when announcements are posted, or resources are updated. The second tab, Time Zone, will let you set your local time. The system default is US Eastern Time. Changing this will show any due dates or calendar events in your local time. The next tab under Preferences will let you set the default language for Sakai. This will change the language of any Sakai-provided buttons, links, and instructions. It will not translate any material provided by your instructor. The last tab, Sites, will allow you to hide sites from your Sites menu. This may be useful if you have a number of old sites that you no longer want or need access to.

**Evaluations Dashboard**
The Evaluations Dashboard is your link to various surveys and course evaluations. If there are any evaluations currently available for you to take, they will be listed when you click on Evaluations Dashboard. If evaluations are available, you will see the title, your status and the open and close dates. Initially, your status will be displayed as “Pending.” Click on the title to take the evaluation and mark your responses to the various questions. Your responses will be completely anonymous.

Once you have answered the evaluation questions, click the Submit Evaluation button at the bottom. This will return you to the Evaluations Dashboard, and your status will show “Completed” for that evaluation. Sakai will send reminder emails about a survey to your student email account. These reminders are only sent to students who have not completed the evaluation.
Evaluations help the college by providing valuable feedback. If an instructor has set up an evaluation, please complete it before the close date listed. Your honest responses will help improve our courses and programs.

Your Class Sites
When you click on one of your class sites, you will initially see the class Overview page. On the right side are the recent announcements for this class, the message center for new messages and forum posts, and optionally the calendar or recent chat room messages. Instructors may choose to use or not use these tools. In the center area, you’ll see information provided by your instructor. This should include instructions for where to go to start out in your class.

All tools for each class are listed in the Navigation Pane on the left. The most frequently used tools are described here. Your instructor may choose to use other tools in addition to any of these.

Syllabus
Click on Syllabus on the left to view, save or print the course syllabus. This document provides important course information, and should be one of the first tools you go to in a new course.

Course Content
Course Content includes unit agendas, note handouts, presentations, videos and other course material that you’ll need. It’s organized into modules, such as weeks, units, or chapters. The material is usually organized chronologically, so you should be able to start at the top of the list and work your way to the end as the class progresses. You should read or view all material provided on the content pages, unless it is marked as an optional resource. Instructors may choose to restrict access to certain modules until certain dates.

Announcements
The Recent Announcements area on the course Home page shows only a few announcements. If you wish to see all past announcements for a course, you will need to click on the Announcements tool in the Navigation Pane.

Calendar
The Calendar tool will give you access to a larger and more detailed view of the course calendar, if your instructor chooses to use this tool. You will not be able to add or edit events on this calendar unless the instructor specifically allows it. The calendar may not contain all due dates for your class. Please be sure to refer to the syllabus, assignments, and other provided information to make sure you know when your work is due.
Messages
The Messages tool is the in-course email. Your Messages area has four folders by default – Received, Sent, Deleted and Drafts. You can create new folders to organize your messages if desired. Click on Received to view any messages sent to you.

Click on Compose Message at the top to send a new message. Under the TO: field, you’ll see a list of all site member’s names as well as “All Participants”, “Instructor Role” and “Student Role.” If your class uses group, those groups will be listed there as well. If your class has more than one instructor, selecting Instructor Role will send your message to all instructors. Student Role will send a message to all students in the class. Otherwise you can select individual recipients from the list.

Forums
The Forums tool is your class discussion board area. Your instructor may require posts here as part of your class work. Instructors will create topics in the forums; students cannot create new topics unless the instructor allows. Next to each topic, you will see the number of messages and unread messages for that topic.

To read messages, click on the topic name. This will display a list of the posts. Unread messages will be in bold. Click on a post to read the message.

To post a new message, click on a topic and click “Start a New Conversation” at the top of the page. This will bring up the text editor. To reply to an existing message, click on that message then click on Reply.

Assignments
The Assignments tool is where you are able to submit homework or other class projects. When you click on Assignments, only currently available or past assignments will appear. Assignments that will be available in the future are not listed. See your syllabus or course schedule for information about future assignments and when they will be available. From the Assignment list, you will see that each has an Open date and a Due date. It is up to the individual instructors whether to accept assignments after the posted due date.

Next to the Assignment title, you will see the status of that assignment. Not Started indicates that there are no uploaded files or saved drafts for this assignment. Draft-In Progress indicates that you have started the assignment but have not turned it in. Submitted indicates that it has been turned in but not graded. The date submitted is also shown. Returned indicates that the instructor has reviewed the assignment and returned it to the student. Click on the Assignment title to view grade, comments or to resubmit the assignment if required.
To view or submit an assignment, click on the Assignment title. This will let you view the instructions and any files provided by your instructor. There are multiple ways to submit an assignment. Your instructor may have you type a response directly into the text editor on the Assignments page.

You may also be required to upload one or more files. Click the Browse button and locate the file on your computer. Click Open to upload that file to Sakai. If you need to add additional files, click on Browse again. You may also click on the Remove link to remove an uploaded file. There is a limit of 5 attachments per assignment.

Once you have completed the assignment and uploaded any files needed, you must click on Submit to turn it in. If you do not click Submit, the instructor will not receive your submission or be able to grade it. You may click Preview to see how the submission will appear to your instructor or Save Draft to keep your work to continue later. If you save your assignment as a draft, be sure to return to submit it.

Tests & Quizzes
If you click on the Tests & Quizzes tool in the Navigation Pane, you will see a list of current and previously available assessments. Tests & Quizzes that are not yet available will not be displayed. You should refer to your syllabus or course schedule to know when any future tests are available.

The first section under Tests & Quizzes shows assessments that are available for you to take. The due date and time is displayed to the left of the assessment title. It is up to individual instructors whether to accept late submissions. To begin an assessment, click on the title. This will display the test information. Here, you will see the time limit for the test and number of submissions you are allowed. Time begins when you click on Begin Assessment.

If you exit the test before completing it, or if your web browser has problems, you can return to the Tests & Quizzes page, click on the assessment title and continue the test. If the assessment is timed, the timer will continue to count down while you are not in the test. The test will be automatically submitted when your timer runs out. Pay attention to the due date – the test will be automatically submitted at the due date, even if time remains. If you start a test with a 60-minute time limit 10 minutes before the due date, you will have only 10 minutes to complete the test.

Instructors may choose to have the test appear all on one page or one question per page, or a group of questions per page. If there are more questions than are displayed, you will have NEXT and PREVIOUS buttons at the bottom of the page. Sakai will automatically save your progress each time you continue to another question or segment. If your test is all displayed on one page, Sakai will not automatically save your progress. If you are concerned about losing work if your browser has problems, you should click the SAVE button frequently to save your work.

Instructors are able to control if you are able to jump to any question, or only navigate to the next question, never returning to previous ones. If you can freely navigate the test, you will see a Table of
Contents link at the top of the test. You can use this to jump to any question. You can also use the NEXT and PREVIOUS buttons to move forward or backward through the test. If your navigation is restricted, you will only have a NEXT button appear, and will not be able to return to any previous questions.

When you have finished the test, click the Submit button. On the submission page, you should see a note about when feedback will be available for you. Instructors will normally allow you to view feedback after submission, after a set date (normally the due date) or not display feedback at all. After you have submitted a test or quiz, it will appear on the Tests & Quizzes page under Submitted Assessments. Here, you can view feedback on your test if the instructor permits. If your instructor permits you to view the score after a test, it will be displayed here. If allowed, you may also click on the submitted assessment name to review which questions you got incorrect.

Even if your instructor does not display the scores here, you may be able to view your scores under the Gradebook tool. **If your test includes Short Answer or Essay questions, please note that your instructor must grade these manually.** Until they’re graded, Sakai will show your score for those questions as a zero. Your score will change as your instructor grades those questions. Please allow your instructor time to grade these questions before worrying about your score.

**Gradebook**
The Gradebook tool allows you to see your scores for the class, including Tests & Quizzes, Assignments and graded Forum posts. When you click on Gradebook, you will see a list of graded items, the due dates, if applicable, your scores and any instructor comments. Your instructor may or may not make your course grade available to you. If this is displayed, be aware that it shows your course grade at that point in time. If zeros are entered for any un-submitted work, your grade will fall.