About getting started

This section contains topics to help new or beginner users orient themselves to Learning Environment and perform some basic tasks.

Interface overview

The following topics cover the basic interface and some common tools you will come across within the system. We suggest you take some time to review these topics to familiarize with Learning Environment.

Introductory tasks

Once you log in for the first time we recommend that you complete the following tasks to further familiarize yourself with Learning Environment:

- Logging in and out
- Understanding My Home and Course Home
- Set your notifications
- Set your preferences
- Create a personal profile

Logging in

System check

If it is your first time logging in to Learning Environment, run a system check to ensure that your computer meets the minimum system requirements.

A system check ensures that you have the appropriate:

- Course required plug-ins, including JavaScript
- Web browser version
- Web browser settings
- Display settings

Run a system check

Click Please click here for a System Check before you login on the Login page.

Note If you fail a component of the system check, you receive a pop-up error message explaining why you failed and what actions to take to meet the requirements.

Logging out

The Logout link is located on the navigation bar. It is on the right side. Selecting Logout takes you to the Login page and ends your current Learning Environment session.
System time-outs

If you are inactive for an extended period of time, the system may log you out of Learning Environment. The time-out period is determined by your site’s configuration. Make sure you save your data regularly.

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Understanding My Home and Course Home

My Home

My Home is your starting point inside Learning Environment. From here, you can set up your profile, edit your preferences, and access your courses. My Home is also the NS Online homepage, where you can access links to available resources.

Course Home

Course Home is the first page you visit when you enter a course. Like My Home, it contains your personal tools and different widgets for displaying information, including course specific content.

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Accessing your courses

Your courses are listed in the My Courses widget in My Home. Simply click the name of the course you want to enter to access it.

Each course has its own unique navbar providing links to the tools and resources available inside the course, the homepage provides a showcase for course related information like news, updates and bookmarks.

To get back to My Home, click My Home on the course navbar.

Setting your preferences

The Preferences tool enables you to customize the layout and presentation options for your view of Learning Environment.

Access the Preferences tool

1. From My Home, click the Preferences link in the Welcome widget.
2. Use the tabs across the top of the page to view and edit different presentation options:

General Preferences

Preferences on this tab are not related to a specific tool.
- **Online Status** Changes your online status so that you appear offline even when you are logged into the system.
- **CD-ROM Drive** Select the drive letter used by your computer's CD-ROM drive. This setting is used when you view course content that references files on a course CD. Not applicable for Mac users.

**Appearance & Accessibility**

- **Font Settings** Adjusting the font face and font size changes the default font and size of the text. It does not affect images, documents, and other objects such as math equations.
- **Dialog Setting** The **Show secondary window as** selector enables secondary windows as pop-ups instead of dialog boxes. This setting helps screen readers and other assistive technologies separate the content of the secondary window from the main window. If you are using assistive technology such as a screen reader, we strongly recommend showing secondary windows as pop-ups.
- **HTML Editor Settings** The HTML editor enables you to enter text and HTML in the system. It has many additional rich text features, if you use assistive technology such as screen readers, some of these features might be difficult to navigate.

**Language & Region**

- **Time Zone** Sets all dates that include times to correspond with the time zone you specify in Learning Environment.

**Discussions**

- **Show the discussion topics list** Sets whether you want to see a list of topics in a left panel when reading messages.
- **Show the search bar** Sets whether you want to show a search bar in the Message List view.
- **Show the preview pane** If you are not showing message text on the main page, this option enables you to specify whether to see the full message in a preview pane at the bottom of the page, or to see the full message in a secondary window.
- **Default Message List View** Specifies how you want to visually represent the message hierarchy within the Message List view. **Threaded View** indents sub-topics underneath their parent topics, whereas **Un-threaded View** does not.
- **Message List Style** Specifies whether to show the text for discussion messages in the main page, or just the titles.
- **Character Limits** Specifies the character limit of each message subject in the Message List view.
- **Reply Settings** Sets whether you want to include original messages with your replies.

**Email**

- **Include original message in email replies** Sets whether to include original messages with your replies.
- **Save a copy of each outgoing message to the ‘Sent Mail’ folder** Saves a copy of your sent messages to a folder for convenient record keeping.
- **‘Reply to’ Email Address** Enables you to specify what email address you want messages sent from the system to appear from.
- **Email Signature** Creates an email signature to include at the bottom of your email messages.
- **Show the Message Preview pane** Enables you to browse emails by displaying them in a preview pane at the bottom of your message list.
- **Show the Folder List pane** Sets whether you see a list of folders in a left panel when reading messages.
Setting your notifications

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The Notifications tool enables you to:

- Receive instant notifications about course events, such as assignment submissions, discussion messages, and news updates.
- Subscribe to a summary of activity for each course and receive a daily email about recent news items and information updates from the Updates widget.
- Change the email and SMS notifications options for your courses.

Access the Notifications tool

Do one of the following:

- From My Home, click the Notifications link in the My Settings widget.
- Click the Notifications icon in the News widget.

Set up an email contact method

1. On the Notifications page, click the Enable email notifications link.
2. Select your email. Choose Use custom email, enter your external email address in the custom email field.
3. Click Save.

Set up a mobile contact method

1. On the Notifications page, click the Register your mobile link.
2. In the Register Your Mobile form, select your Country, select your Mobile Carrier, and enter your Mobile Number.
3. Click Save.
4. After you receive a registration confirmation code on your mobile device, enter it in the **Confirmation Code** field.
5. Click **Confirm**.

### Subscribe to a summary of activity

**Note** You must set up your email contact method to subscribe to a summary of activity.

1. On the Notifications page, select from the drop-down list **How often?** you want to receive a summary of activity. Select from the **At what time?** drop-down lists when you want to receive your daily digest.
2. Click **Save**.

### Subscribe to instant notifications

1. On the Notifications page, beside each instant notification option listed beneath Dropbox, News, and Discussion Events:
   - Select the **Receive email notifications** check box to enable email notifications.
   - Select the **Receive SMS notifications** check box to enable SMS notifications.
2. Click **Save**.

### Exclude courses from notifications

1. On the Notifications page, click the **Manage my course exclusions** link.
2. Click the **Exclude** icon beside each course you want to exclude, or click **Exclude All Courses** to stop all course notifications.
3. Click **Close**.

### Restore excluded course notifications

1. On the Notifications page, click the **Manage my exclusions** link.
2. Click the **Include** icon beside each course you want to receive notifications from, or click **Clear course exclusions** to restore all excluded courses.
3. Click **Close**.

### Creating a personal profile

Create and edit your personal profile through the My Profile tool. **Filling out your profile is optional**, but this feature is a great way to get to know other users. If you are not comfortable revealing certain information about yourself, simply leave the profile or a particular field blank. Your profile information may be available through the Classlist. Your profile picture may be shown next to your discussion posts and name in classlists.

### Complete your personal profile

1. From My Home, click the **Profile** link in the **My Settings** widget.
2. Fill in the text fields.
3. To upload a picture, click the **Change Picture** button, locate and select the desired image, and click **Upload**.
4. If desired, provide URLs to your Facebook Twitter, Google, or LinkedIn accounts.
5. If desired, enter your email, home phone, and mobile phone.
6. When you are finished, click Save.

Note You can also edit your profile from the Classlist.

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