

Mahara User Guide

Class of 2017

How we are using Mahara at Future Generations Graduate School

The purpose of using an ePortfolio system as part of your graduate school program is to provide a student-centered space to showcase work and interact with faculty and peers. Mahara also provides additional flexibility and space for creativity around how to demonstrate learning in diverse media and share that learning with a variety of audiences, both within and beyond the Graduate School.

Profile Requirements

Both faculty and students are required to create and maintain an institutional Mahara portfolio. These portfolios are accessible to everyone participating in the Graduate School's Mahara network. The portfolio provides some information about you and your experience, current work, goals, and progress. It also facilitates an interactive space for student-centered interaction within courses and a larger network among the Graduate School faculty and students. Students are also required to create a public portfolio as a way to share highlights of your education and work with your community and beyond.

Faculty Profile Requirements:

1. Create an institutional profile in Mahara (before term 1 residential in India—January 29, 2016)

Minimum required sections:

- Contact information:
 - Email address
 - Phone number or Skype ID
- About me
 - A welcome message
- Resume including at least:
 - Educational background
 - Recent books/publications/projects
 - Interests

Other suggested sections:

- Links to favorite resources

- Favorite reading list
 - Additional online presence (recorded talks, Wikipedia entries, blogs, YouTube channels, etc.)
2. Update this institutional profile before the start of each term with any new publications or links as well as updated contact information, as appropriate.

Student Profile Requirements:

1. Create an institutional profile in Mahara (by the end of the India residential in February 2016)

Minimum required profile sections:

- Contact information:
 - Email address
 - Phone number or Skype ID
- About me
 - A welcome message
- Resume including at least:
 - Educational background
 - Community/employment background
 - Interests

Other suggested profile sections:

- Future Generations work that you are proud of
 - Links to favorite resources
 - Favorite reading list
 - Additional online presence (recorded talks, Wikipedia entries, blogs, YouTube channels, etc.)
2. Update your institutional profile at the beginning of each term with new information as appropriate (including new work from the previous term).
 3. Create a public portfolio by the end of term 1 (May 6, 2016):
 - Create a public portfolio that contains information about you and the Master's program that you would like to share with your community/employer/peers outside of Future Generations. This includes showcasing work from your courses and practicum.
 - Update this portfolio at the end of each term to reflect new learning artifacts and reflections, as relevant
 4. Use Mahara for class collections and fora:

- Mahara offers capabilities to:
 - Create student groups
 - Share collections of course assignments
- Faculty will assign utilization of Mahara functionalities, as applicable, in their syllabi and/or on Moodle for specific course assignment
- Mahara may be an option for presentation of learning artifacts as well; talk with the Graduate School's Mahara team and with your faculty members about how Mahara can help support your ideas for learning artifacts—particularly using different media!

Logging in to Mahara

1. To access the e-portfolio software: from the Future Generations Moodle homepage below the calendar on the right, there is a link that says "Mahara" under a heading called "E-Portfolios." Please click on the Mahara link.
2. You will now be re-directed to Future Generations' Mahara site. You will need to register here the first time you try to login, and you should use the same login information as your Moodle login.
3. Once you are registered, you will likely need to login again using the login information that you just set up. Then, you will end up on the Mahara "Dashboard" page.

Dashboard Area Overview

This is the page you will land on when you first login, and it is like your homepage. Only you can see this page. There are some quick links to adding content, sharing information, and managing your friends and groups. You can also see recent activity on the site by you and others towards the bottom.

Content Area Overview

The Content area in Mahara is where you control the content that you can display on a portfolio Page. Content such as learning artifacts and other media including photos and other files need to be uploaded here and can then be linked to the page(s) that you want them to appear on.

Content Areas are as follows:

- **Profile:** This area lets you enter information about yourself, contact information, messaging information and general information.
- **Profile Pictures:** This area is where you can upload a picture of yourself to display in your portfolio, like a Facebook avatar.
- **Files:** This area is where you can create folders to store uploaded files (like PDFs, DOCs, images, etc.). Please be aware that you only have 50MB worth of file storage space in your account, so link out to videos and large files. These files/folders can then be displayed on a portfolio Page.
- **Journal:** This area provides you with a tool to keep an on-line journal, and you can share either your full journal, or specific journal entries, on a portfolio Page.

- **Resume:** This area provides you with a Resume and Cover Letter builder. For the Resume, you cannot edit or change the main headers (Introduction, Education & Employment, etc.). If you have your own Resume in Word or PDF, you can, alternatively, upload it to the Files area and then link to it on a portfolio Page.
- **Plans:** This area provides you with a Task List tool. You can create various Plans for your work on projects, etc., and then display the Plan on a portfolio Page.
- **Notes:** This area is where any Note content you have placed on a portfolio Page appears. If you have many Notes in many portfolios, they will all be displayed here, where you can edit them, etc.

Portfolio Area Overview

The Portfolio area in Mahara is where you will copy or build Pages for your portfolio. You can either build new Pages, or, you may have permission to Copy a Page (if someone has setup a template portfolio for you to copy). The Portfolio Tools are as follows:

- **Pages:** This area displays all of your portfolio Pages and is also the area where you Create Pages or Copy Pages. You can also remove Pages in this area by clicking on the X icon to the right of your Page name (deletion is final, so be careful). This is also the area where you will go to Edit your Pages.
- **Collections:** This area in Mahara shows you any Collections of Pages that you may have created, or copied. A collection of Pages is exactly how it sounds ... two or more Pages that you wish to join together and display as a Collection. There is an option when collecting Pages that allows you to include navigational tabs based on Page names (which makes your portfolio look like a tabbed website).
- **Shared by me:** This is the area where you can set Share permissions for your portfolio (either a Collection and/or an individual Page). While in this area, you can set access permissions by user or group, and you can also create a Secret URL (a link that allows people who have it to view your portfolio who otherwise would not be able to find it) to copy and send to those outside of Mahara who you may want to view the Page/Collection.
- **Shared with me:** Provides a list of other pages that have been shared with you by others.
- **Export:** This area contains the tools to help you export a portfolio Page or Collection, or, your entire data in Mahara. You can export to standard HTML format so that you can move your portfolio to a separate website outside of Mahara. The Export area is also good for just backing-up your portfolio to your own computer.
- **Import:** allows you to import another portfolio, if you have one stored elsewhere (likely not relevant for many of us).

Groups Area Overview

The Groups area is where you will see all of the Groups that you have membership in, as well as other Shared Pages from other user's portfolios. You can also view, search for, and add friends here. Finally, you can change your institutional membership (please do not do that, unless you have discussed in-depth with Stephanie what the implications of this are).

Viewing your Profile

You can view your profile at any time by clicking on your name (either at the very top of the page or on the right hand side, depending on which page you are on). Please note that you have to return to the Content in order to actually edit the content of any of the sections. If you are on your profile page and click “edit this page,” it will take you to the level where you can add/remove and reorganize where each section of the page is located, but not the actual content of a section.

Sharing

After you have set up your portfolio in Mahara, you should edit it to make sure that your share permissions are set properly. You can create different pages that are shared with different audiences (e.g. with the institution, with the public, with group within a course, etc.).

You can set your Sharing Permissions in a few areas:

- If you are editing a Page in Mahara, you can click on the SHARE tab to set sharing.
- You can also get at Sharing Permissions via your Dashboard page in Mahara (the first page you see when logged into Mahara) by clicking on the tabs Portfolio > Share > Edit Access ... where you can set permissions for either a Collection of Pages, or Individual Pages.
- Remember, if you share your entire portfolio collection, or individual pages, with your Group (course), then all members of that Group can visit, view and provide feedback on your pages.

You have full control over who sees your portfolio pages. So, you could set Sharing for most of the semester for your main professors, and then, later in the semester, add your entire Group to the Share. Look to your professor(s) for more guidance in this area.

Notes on Going beyond this Simple Overview

Mahara has many more detailed features than what is covered in this simple overview. The official Mahara User Manual is quite helpful and is continually updated. The Graduate School’s Mahara team may be able to help directly or will ensure that you get a timely answer to questions and help with any issues that arise.

Where to Go for Technical Assistance with Mahara

Within the Graduate School, there several places you can turn to for help. Your peers may be the best place to start, since they are learning right along with you and may well have tried (and may have found a solution to) whatever step you are having difficulty with. The faculty member(s) for a course assignment in Mahara may be the second best place to turn since they have designed the assignment and will be working with other students who may have had similar questions or difficulties. Finally, there is a team that has been working to help set up Mahara and facilitate the use of this platform by both students and faculty; this team can be contacted by sending an email to mahara.help@future.edu.

The complete official user manual for Mahara version 15.10.0 can be viewed at <http://manual.mahara.org/en/15.10/>. This is updated periodically by the developers of Mahara and offer details instructions and explanations of the various features in Mahara and how to set up and edit different parts of your profile.

There are also a number of resources available via the Mahara Wiki page at https://wiki.mahara.org/wiki/User_Guide/Tutorials_about_Mahara or on YouTube.