Introduction to Brightspace by D2L

Introduction

Brightspace by D2L is the learning management system we use at SFA. Using Brightspace, you can:

- Communicate with your students through email and news
- Create, upload, and organize course content
- Enter and calculate grades
- Create and grade quizzes, assignments, and discussions
- Set up group-based activities, including discussions and assignments
- And much more!

This handout will provide you with the fundamentals you need to know in order to get started.

**Note:** Brightspace is normally available 24/7. However, SFA performs routine systems maintenance one Saturday per month during daytime hours, during which time Brightspace may be temporarily unavailable. Faculty are advised to keep this in mind when determining due dates for online activities.

How do I access Brightspace?

There are two methods for accessing Brightspace, as follows:

- The fastest and most direct method is to go directly to [http://d2l.sfasu.edu](http://d2l.sfasu.edu) and log in with your mySFA username and password.
- Alternately, you can log into mySFA first ([http://mysfa.sfasu.edu](http://mysfa.sfasu.edu)), click on the Faculty tab, then scroll down and click on the Brightspace by D2L link.

What are the technical requirements to use the system?

You can use any web browser you wish. For optimal performance when creating and editing materials in Brightspace, we recommend that you use Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.
Where do I see my student roster?

To see your list of students in any course, click on Communication Tools > Classlist. On this screen you’ll also be able to see at a glance when each student has most recently logged into the course.

Bear in mind, however, that your official rosters are located in Banner (mySFA). Though information from the Banner system regularly syncs with Brightspace, it is possible for you to see students in your Brightspace classlist who have already dropped your course. When in doubt, check your official roster.

How can I email my class?

The quickest way to email students in Brightspace is to use your course Classlist screen. To locate this screen, simply click on Communication Tools > Classlist.

On the Classlist screen, click the Email Classlist button. Next, scroll to the bottom of the list and click the Send Email button at the bottom of the screen, fill out the email subject and message, then click Send.

Emails sent to your students from within Brightspace go only to their Brightspace email inboxes, not to their official SFA email accounts. Although individuals can specify an email forwarding address in their Brightspace email settings, it is not possible to respond to forwarded copies of emails outside Brightspace. To respond to a Brightspace email, it is always necessary to log into Brightspace and respond from within the system.
How do I know if I have new email messages?

When you log into Brightspace, you’ll see at a glance if you have any new email messages. Look for the envelope icon in the topmost toolbar, to the left of where you see your name. If you have new message, there will be a dot on the envelope icon.

In addition to the new mail icon, the Updates widget inside a course will display the number of new emails waiting for you.

If you see an indicator that you have new email to read but cannot find the message(s), try using the Filter By drop-down menu in your email (shown below). You can filter to see emails just from a specific course, or filter by All Messages.

How do I add a syllabus and other files to my class?

If you already have your syllabus and other documents in Word or PDF format, you can easily upload them into the content area of your course. Content is organized into modules that act as folders for housing and organizing your materials. By default, new content has a status of Published, meaning that it is visible to students. Content that you’ve changed to Draft status is hidden from students.

To get started adding content to your course:

1. Click on the Content link on the course toolbar.

2. Create a module to contain your files. Just click where you see the words “Add a module,” type a name for the module, and press <Enter>.
3. Click the New button, and select Upload Files.

4. Click the Upload button, locate your files, and add them to the list of files to upload.

5. Click the Add button. The files now appear inside your content module, and are visible to your students.
**Copying content from one course into another**

To copy content that you have in one course into any of your other courses (for example, to copy content from one semester’s course into the next semester’s course):

1. Go into the blank course that you want to copy content into.
2. Click on the cog icon right beside your name in the upper-right corner of the screen.
3. Click **Import/Export/Copy Components**.
4. Make sure “Copy Components from Another Org Unit” is selected, and leave the “Include protected resources” check box checked. Click **Search for offering**.
5. Enter a course name or number to search for and press <Enter>, or, to see a complete list of what you have taught, leave the “Search for” field blank, and click the magnifying glass to return a list of all your courses.
6. Select the desired course, then click the **Add Selected** button at the bottom.
7. To copy everything from the selected course into the new course, click the **Copy All Components** button, then wait for the copy process to finish. If you prefer to select specific items to copy, click the **Select Components** button, and proceed to the next step.
8. Select the items you wish to copy, then click the **Continue** button at the bottom of the screen.

9. Click **Finish**.

10. Wait while the content is copied over.

Copying content into the course will not overwrite or delete any content you might already have created there; it will simply add on to what is already present in the course. You can copy content from multiple courses into the same course.

### Enrolling others into your class

Students who have registered for your class using mySFA will automatically appear in your Classlist; you will not need to manually enroll them. However, you can enroll other individuals—such as a TA—into a course, provided they already have access to in Brightspace. Here’s how:

1. Click on **Communication Tools > Classlist**.
2. Click **Add Participants**.
3. Click **Add existing users**.
4. In the “Search For” box, type in either their first name and last name or their mySFA username, then press <Enter> or click the magnifying glass.
5. Click the checkbox to the left of the desired name.
6. Choose the desired **Role** from the “Select a Role” drop-down menu.
7. Click **Enroll Selected Users**.

Give someone an **Instructor** role in your course **only if** you wish them to be able to do everything that you do (including editing content and grading student work).

Give someone a **TA** role if you wish them to have access to the Grades area and the ability to see and score all the students’ work, but not enable them to edit the course content.

Give someone an **Auditor** role in order to give them “view only” access to your course materials.

### Limiting student access to your course

Your Brightspace courses will have default Start and End dates, but you can change those dates to suit your needs. Before the course Start date, students cannot access the course. After the course End date, students cannot continue to access the course.
To modify course Start and End dates:

1. Click on Course Tools > Manage Dates.

   ![Manage Dates](image)

2. Click pencil icon next to the course start and end dates. The Edit Course Dates dialog box appears.

   ![Edit Course Dates](image)

3. Change the start and end dates and times as desired.
4. Click Save.

**Managing your course files**

Each course has a file manager where all the course files that you create and upload reside. You can create a folder structure in your file manager to keep things organized. In a course, go to Course Tools > Manage Files to access your file manager.

If you are planning to add or build a lot of content in your course, best practice is to mirror your course content structure in your Manage Files area and to use the Set Default Path function to ensure that new content is logically located and easy to find (and update) in the future.
To ensure that your course content is well-organized from the start, follow these steps to set your default path in each module:

1. Create a module in your course content (if you don’t already have one).
2. Select the module in the Table of Contents.
3. Click the drop-down arrow next to the module title and select **Set Default Path**.

4. In the dialog box that pops up, click **Change Path**.
5. In the Select a Path dialog box, click **New Folder**.

6. In the next dialog box, type a name in the **Folder Name** box that matches the name of the corresponding content module, then click **Create**.
7. Back in the Select a Path dialog box, click the name of the new folder, then click Select Path.

8. Click Save.

Now when you create new files or upload files into this module, those materials will be located in the corresponding folder in Manage Files.

**Tip:** Repeat these steps as needed to set a unique default path for each of your content modules.

**How do I get help?**

Brightspace help for faculty, staff, and students is available by phone at 468-1919 or by email at d2l@sfasu.edu.