# Saylor Academy Student Handbook

Revised and Updated November 2017

**Welcome to the Saylor Academy community!**

This handbook is an overview of what to expect in your studies with us and what we expect from our students, including some important rules that all students should know. It is also a brief introduction to Saylor Academy: our history, our mission, and our community.

As a member of the Saylor Academy community, you agree to abide by the contents of this handbook as well as our privacy policy and terms of use.

Please note that the contents of this handbook could be revised at any time or might not be completely up to date – things change! If you have any questions, just ask.

**– The Saylor Academy Team**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ABOUT SAYLOR ACADEMY

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of a talented team in Washington, DC, as well as academic consultants from around the world. Our community includes students from virtually every place on Earth.

Since 2008, we have worked to create high-quality, tuition-free, open online courses. We are not exactly like the MOOC providers that you may know; our courses are available at any time and on any schedule, and we use free-to-share and free-to-reuse materials whenever possible. Although we are not an accredited institution and do not confer degrees, we are making great strides in building college credit opportunities.

# STUDY AT SAYLOR ACADEMY

## About our Courses

Learning at Saylor Academy is:

- **self-guided** - we do not have faculty or teaching assistants to grade your work or to provide close guidance – your learning is in your hands.

- **self-paced** – there are no start and end dates to our courses. You can study completely on your own schedule.

- **open** - whenever possible, we use materials that are free to reuse and re-mix, including content in the public domain or licensed under Creative Commons.

Our courses are designed by experienced professors, practitioners, and other educators who have matched the sequence of learning to well-defined learning outcomes.

## Technical Requirements

Here are some technology requirements:

- **Internet access** - our courses are designed to be taken online. Offline access is possible for many of our materials, although this is largely up to the student to manage.

- **Common browser plugins and utilities** - In our materials, you will encounter different types of content, including Javascript, Flash, pdf, doc/docx, ppt, xls/xlsx, and so forth. Most modern web browsers and freely-available software can display this content.

## Registration and Enrollment

You do not have to apply for admission to Saylor Academy. There is no single way to begin, but here is one we recommend:

1. Sign up for an account at https://learn.saylor.org/login

2. Find a course you would like to begin at https://learn.saylor.org

3. Read the Course Introduction and Syllabus

4. From a course page, click **Enroll me in this course** to add a course to your dashboard

5. Begin learning at Unit 1 – everything you need is available within the course

Learn more about getting started in our [Help Center](#).

## Course Materials

Our courses are collections of materials curated from the web – webpages, videos, documents, quizzes, and so forth. When necessary, we create our own resources.

## Accessibility

Saylor Academy strives to provide courses and associated learning resources that are accessible to all learners.

For example, our selection of materials favors HTML and other formats that can readily be used by screen reading software. Our course software, called Moodle, incorporates established practices and standards for accessibility.

Because we are open to all visitors on the Web and rely on curated content, we do not always have the necessary rights to provide alternate versions of some materials (e.g. transcripts for videos for which the copyright holder reserves all rights).

Please contact our team with your questions, suggestions, and requests regarding accessibility.

# STUDENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION

As a registered user of the Saylor Academy site, you will be able to generate and have access to records of your learning activity.

Information available to logged in students when viewing a course include progress tracking, access to assessment and exam activities and grades, and course completion certificates. Further records are available in your user dashboard and account pages, including a list of your course completions.

Through our certificate issuing partner, Accredible, you will also have access to your digital transcript and individual digital certificates of completion, which offer the ability to print, share, and add evidence of your learning.

Review our **privacy policy** and **terms of use** for more details on what information we gather and how we use it:

> https://www.saylor.org/privacy-policy
> https://www.saylor.org/terms-of-use

When you sign up for your Saylor Academy account or for our email list, we ask for additional information about you, much of which you are able to opt out of sharing. These details are valuable to us in providing the best services possible for our students – we use this information to set priorities and identify areas for improvement.

**Students should have only one account with Saylor Academy.** Creating multiple accounts to bypass waiting periods or other restrictions is not allowed (see "Academic Code of Conduct" below). Exceptions for keeping separate personal and professional accounts can be made; please get in touch.

# STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We wholeheartedly invite you into our learning community. We ask only that you uphold our community standards and that you hold us to high standards in return. Your continued use of Saylor Academy represents a commitment on your part to do so.

As a Saylor Academy student, these are among your rights:

- Freedom to pursue your educational goals
- Access to fair, unbiased, and clear assessment
- Freedom of inquiry and expression, subject to community standards
- Expectation of good faith in dealings with Saylor Academy
- Fair and timely redress of issues

All members of the Saylor Academy community – students, faculty, and staff – are responsible for upholding the standards outlined below. These policies do not supercede our privacy policy and terms of use.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Saylor Academy is committed to equality of opportunity. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, we do not engage in discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation including gender identity or gender expression, or veteran status, and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to our educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions.

## Community Code of Conduct

We value freedom of expression and diversity of opinion as well as civility and respect for others. We do not tolerate any offensive or threatening behavior, profanity, or acts of harassment or embarrassment at the expense of others in any communication surrounding or using our materials. In short, express yourself positively and be good to one another!

Consequences for not following the community code of conduct may include removal of materials posted to our site, issuing of warnings and/or suspension of an account, and denial or revocation of certificates and credentials. Please refer to our Terms of Use as well as our discussion forums guidelines.

## Academic Code of Conduct

We uphold high standards of academic integrity, including honest representation of your work. Falsifying documents, misrepresenting yourself or your work, or otherwise ignoring stated policies and instructions is not allowed.

You are permitted to use notes and course (or related) resources while taking assessments or regular certificate exams. You are still expected to complete exams individually and a certificate of completion should represent the honest efforts of the person who has earned it

Proctored exams (typically associated with college credit opportunities) are closed-book; that is, you may not use your notes or other resources while taking the exam, except where specific resources such as formula sheets or calculators are indicated in an exam's instructions.

Please respect the integrity of all our exams by not sharing or publishing final exam questions and answers, for example in the discussion forums or on other websites.

Work submitted as your own must be your own creation. Consequences for not following the academic code of conduct may include removal of materials posted to our site, issuing of warnings and/or suspension or deletion of an account, and denial or revocation of certificates and credentials.

**A quick note on plagiarism**: most basically, plagiarism is the use of others' expression and ideas without proper credit. Because content is easily copied and shared on the web, plagiarism remains one of the most common, if often accidental, academic errors. Your chances to commit plagiarism at Saylor Academy are few, but do be mindful and follow the standards outlined above.

**A note about exam re-takes:** generally, you may take a Saylor Academy final exam as many times as needed in order for you to pass it. However, **all final exams have a mandatory waiting period between attempts of 7 days for regular certificate exams and 14 days for Direct Credit exams**.

This waiting period is meant to encourage you to reflect and study after an unsuccessful attempt. In this way, you reinforce what you have learned. By making multiple attempts in a row impossible, the waiting period also helps protects the integrity of the exam. All of these, in turn, promote the value of our course certificates.

Do not create additional accounts to get around the waiting periods. **If you believe you have a legitimate need to access an exam before the waiting period has ended, please contact us.**

# Student Grievances

If you suspect that there is an error in your grade calculation, please contact us. Sometimes our staff are able to make a rapid determination and sometimes we send the error reports to one of our consulting faculty, which can take somewhat longer. In either event, if we find that we are in error, we will adjust your grade accordingly.

If you believe that a member of the community is not upholding our standards of conduct, please contact us.

## GETTING HELP

The first, best place to look for help when you run into problems is our Help Center. There you will find a wealth of information, including information on getting started, troubleshooting, exams, certificates, etc.

If your question is not answered in our Help Center , please contact us.

## STAYING INFORMED

### Saylor Academy Blog

https://www.saylor.org/blog

We share updates and other thoughts in our blog. You can subscribe by email and RSS. All blog posts also are sent to the disucssion forums, where you can comment on posts.

### Discussion forums

https://discourse.saylor.org/

In the forums you can engage with other students on either course-related or more general topics. A good place to begin is by introducing yourself: https://discourse.saylor.org/t/introductions/

# CONTACT SAYLOR ACADEMY

The best way to get in touch with Saylor Academy staff is at www.saylor.org/contact or by sending an email to contact@saylor.org

From the Help Center, use the **Submit a request** link to send us a message.

Our mailing address is:

Saylor Academy
1875 Connecticut Ave NW
10th Floor
Washington, DC 20009