Oncourse: Using the Matrices Tool, For Students

How to use the matrices tool in Oncourse to complete portfolio requirements

What is a matrix?

A matrix is a table of columns and rows that contains a collection of instructions, forms, and files. The purpose of a matrix is to guide you through a series of related portfolio activities. The image below shows one example of a matrix. Since all matrices are customizable, the matrix you work with may not look exactly like the one shown here.

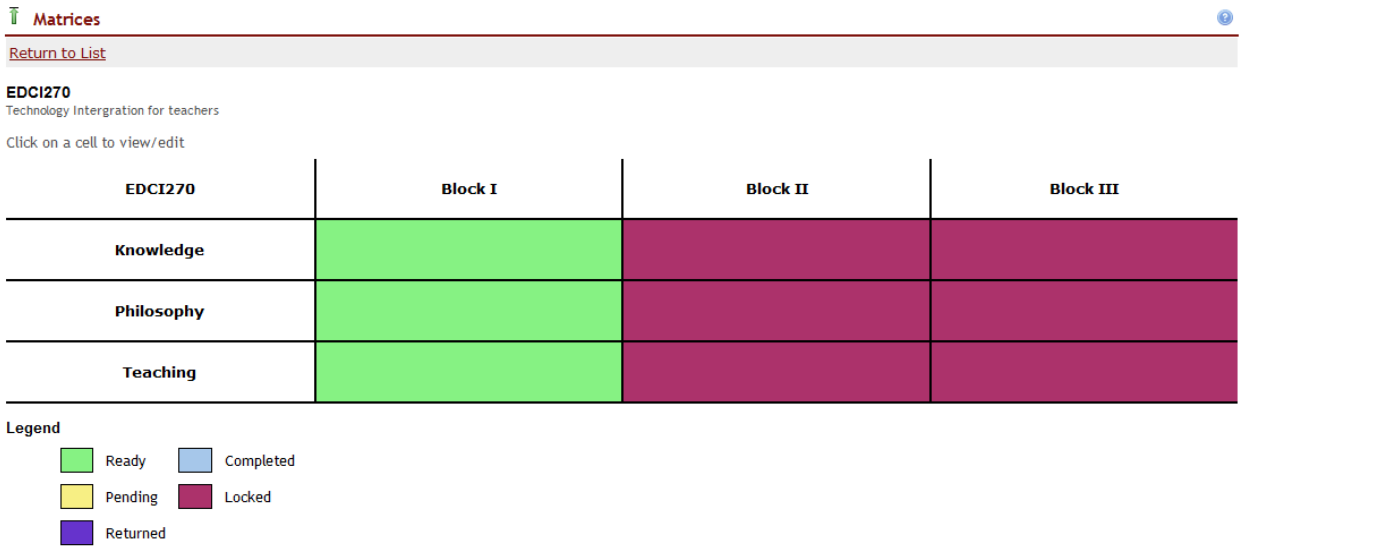

Figure 1

The intersection of a row and column is called a cell. Matrix cells are color-coded to indicate their level of completion. While it is possible for an instructor to customize the colors used, the colors that are set by default are:

- Ready (green) – indicates that the cell is open and available for you to begin work.
- Pending (yellow) – indicates that you have submitted the cell for evaluation and review is pending. You can't edit content in pending cells.
- Blue - indicates that evaluation is complete.
- Purple – indicates that the cell is locked.
- Darker purple – indicates that the cell has been returned by a reviewer.

Each matrix cell links to a Web page containing a customized collection of instructions, links, and forms. The next several sections will explain how to access and work with a matrix.

Accessing your matrix

Your instructor (or whoever is facilitating your portfolio experience) will provide you with the name of the course or portfolio site containing your matrix as well as the name of the matrix itself. To access the matrix, follow these steps:

1. **Log in to Oncourse.**
2. **Click the appropriate tab** to access the name of the course or portfolio site containing your matrix.
   If the site is not visible, you may have to click the -more- tab and select the appropriate site from the expanded list.
3. From the tool list on the left, **Click the Matrices tool**.
4. When the Available Matrices screen appears, **Click the appropriate matrix title to begin working**.
5. When the matrix appears, **Click a cell colored as Ready** (probably a green cell, but check the legend to be sure).
   A new screen appears. The appearance of this screen will vary greatly, depending on what requirements your instructor (or matrix facilitator) has chosen to include. In most cases, this screen contains information and instructions, a place for adding attachments, and/or a link for adding a reflection.
6. **Read the information and instructions carefully.**
   If the cell does not contain instructions, your instructor (or matrix facilitator) will provide you with directions through some other means.

Uploading, selecting, and adding items to a matrix cell

You may be instructed to attach one or more items to the matrix cell to support or demonstrate your mastery of specific learning goals. Items are examples of your work. An item can be almost any type of file (e.g., text file, PowerPoint file, video file, audio file, image, or the URL for a resource on the Web). When uploading an item to a matrix, you must first know where the item is currently located on your computer or storage device.

To attach an item that is located outside of Oncourse:

1. **Verify that you are looking at the first screen after clicking on a matrix cell** (as directed in the last section of these materials).
2. In the Items section, **Click on the Add link in the Actions column for Attachments**.
   The Add Attachment window appears providing several different options.
3. **Click Browse.**
4. **Navigate to the file you want to upload and select it.**
5. **Click Open.**
   After a few seconds, the file will appear in the Items to attach section.
6. **Click Continue.**
7. When the file appears in the Items section, **Click Return to Matrix**.
   A new icon will now be visible in the appropriate cell of the matrix, indicating that an item has been uploaded. If you point to the icon, a pop-up tag will show the name, size, and date when the file was last modified.

To attach an item that is stored in the Resources folder in My Workspace in Oncourse:

1. **Click on a cell in the matrix** to open it.
2. In the Items section, **Click on the Add link** in the Actions column for Attachments.
   Note: If you already attached a file Click the Add/Drop link.
3. **Find the file you want to submit in the Select a resource section** at the bottom of the screen.
4. **Click the Attach a copy link** located to the right of the file.
5. When the Add Attachment screen appears with the item you selected listed under Items to attach, **Click Continue.**
   After a few seconds, the file will appear in the Items section.
6. **Click Return to Matrix**.

Note: To remove a file after it has been attached to a cell, click on the cell of the matrix where the artifact is located. When the next screen appears, click the Remove link to the right of the file name.

Adding a reflection to a matrix cell

If there is a Reflection section visible when you open a matrix cell, it means that you are required to write a reflection before submitting the contents of the cell for evaluation.

1. **Click on a cell in the matrix** to open it.
   Click the Add link in the Reflections section.
2. When the reflection form appears, **Type your reflection into the form or copy and paste text from an existing document.**
   Your instructor may have provided additional guidance on what to include in your reflection.
3. **Click Save Changes** when you have finished entering your text.
   You will be returned to the Matrices screen. At this point, the reflection has not been submitted for evaluation and you can still continue to edit it by clicking on the Edit link located to the right of the reflection.

How do I request peer feedback?

Some matrix cells include an option to invite others to review and comment on the content you have added to a matrix cell before you submit it for evaluation.

1. **Click on a cell in the matrix** to open it.
2. **Click Request Feedback.**

   If reviewers have been pre-selected by the matrix author, you will see the prompt "Are you sure you want to request feedback on this cell?".

   a. To complete the action, **Click Send Request**.

      The pre-selected reviewers will receive an email notification that your cell is ready to review.

   If you are prompted to select reviewers, you will see the Request Feedback Page.

   a. **Select the reviewers from the Users list**
   b. **Click Add>>**

      or enter a reviewer's username or email address in the text field and click Add.

      Note: Anyone with a valid IU account (including Guest accounts) can be added as a reviewer.

   c. **Click Continue.**

      The Notify Reviewers screen appears. By default all the Reviewers are selected under in the To field.

Note: Be aware you can choose to notify only some of the available reviewers. If a reviewers name is not selected in the To field they will not receive an email notification and may be unable to access the matrix cell to provide feedback.

d. To include a personal message, **Enter message text in the "Message" field.**

e. **Click Send** to notify the selected reviewers.

When a reviewer adds feedback to your cell, you will receive an email notification.

Submitting a matrix cell for final evaluation

After you have completed all the required tasks, you will need to submit the cell so that your work can be formally evaluated.

1. **Review your work carefully.**
   After you submit it, the cell will be locked and you will not be able to make changes. A Submit Cell for Evaluation button will only be visible at the bottom of the screen if you have added items to the cell.
2. **Click Submit Cell for Evaluation.**
3. When the Submit for Evaluation warning box appears, asking if you are sure you are ready to submit the page, **Click Submit.**
4. **Click Return to Matrix** at the bottom of the page.
   The color of the cell you just submitted will have changed, indicating that its status is now "pending." After you make a submission, a designated evaluator (or group of evaluators) reviews the contents of the cell and completes an evaluation form.
5. To read the comments and ratings **after the evaluator(s) has submitted this evaluation, open the cell and click the title of the completed evaluation form(s)** in the Evaluations section of the cell.

How do I provide peer feedback for another student in their matrix?

You may receive email messages from other students asking you to provide feedback on one of their matrix cells.

To provide feedback:

1. **Click the link in the email message** to go directly to the appropriate matrix cell.
   You will be asked to log into Oncourse if you are not already logged in.
2. **Log into Oncourse**, if necessary.
3. **Click the names of any forms, items, and reflections to open, and review them**.
4. **Click the Add link** in the Feedback section to add general feedback.
   or to offer feedback on a specific item in the Items section, Click Add Feedback next to the specific item.
5. **Type your feedback directly into the text box or copy and paste text from another document**.
6. **Click Save Changes** to return to the matrix cell.
   The owner of the cell will be notified as soon as you save the feedback form.

Finding more training on Wizards, Matrices and other tools in Oncourse

For more help using the Matrices and Wizards tools, as well as other Oncourse tools, see the Help documentation that is included in Oncourse. You can access these resources by using the question mark icon located in the upper right corner of each screen in Oncourse, or you can click the Help tool that is located at the bottom of the list of tools on the menubar.