

Essential Student Skills: Creating a blog using Mahara



Introduction

If you are asked to create a blog as part of your coursework in Brightspace, you will use a tool called Mahara.

Mahara has several useful features that make it a good option for blogging, including the fact that it is by default private. To share anything with a lecturer or more widely, you have to set that up manually.



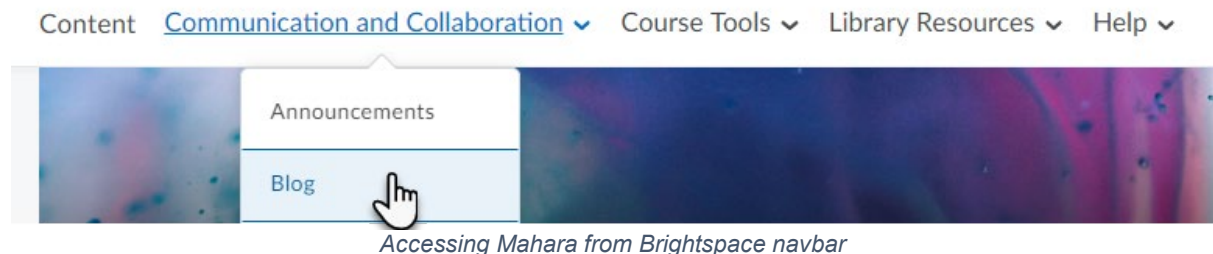
The following pages detail the steps involved in creating a blog with Mahara.

Note: UHI already has [illustrated guidance](#) for using Mahara to create blogs. This resource will link out to that guidance wherever appropriate.

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Accessing Mahara

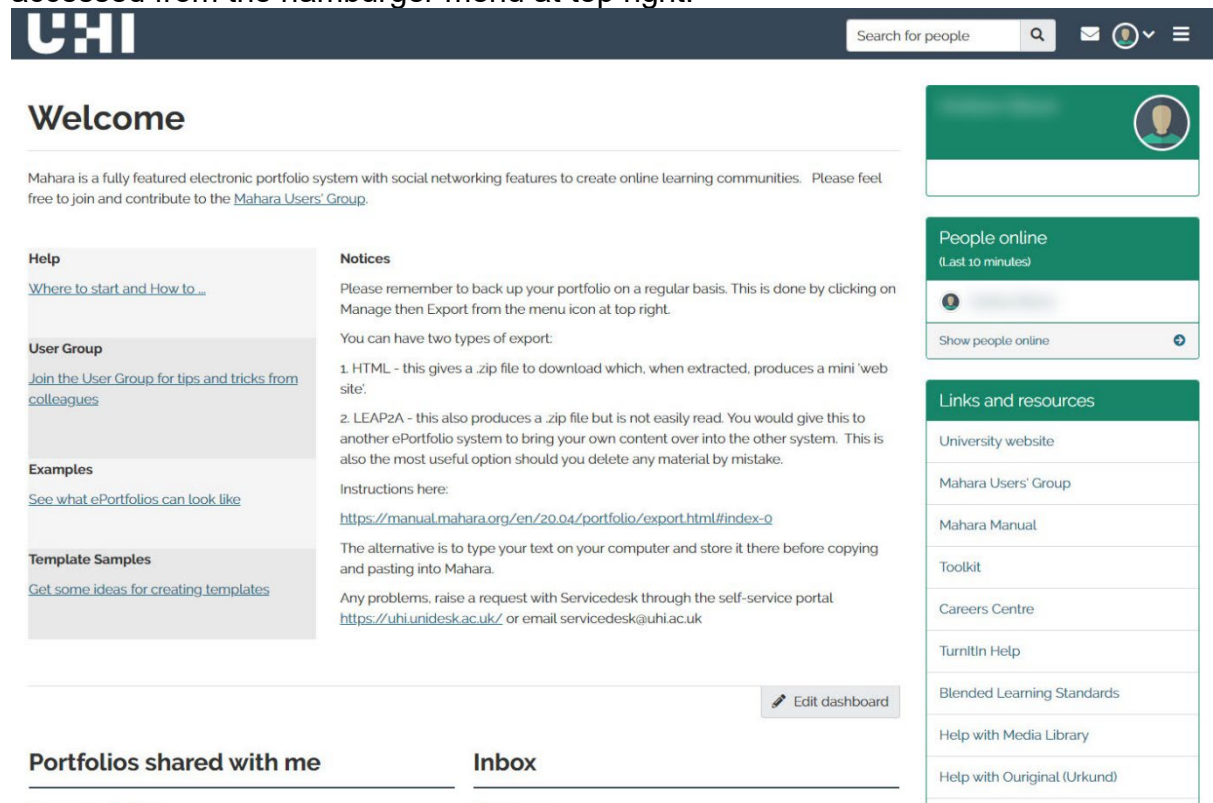
From the navbar in Brightspace go to **Communication and Collaboration > Blog**



Accessing Mahara from Brightspace navbar

Clicking on **Blog** takes you to the Mahara login screen: Use your UHI ID and password to login.

Once logged in: The first screen you are taken to is the Dashboard. This welcome page offers links to various sources of help, Groups, FAQs etc. Mahara functions are accessed from the hamburger menu at top right.



Picture of Mahara dashboard

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Completing your profile

If you are new to Mahara, the first thing you should do is complete your profile.

To do this, click on the **Down** arrow beside your avatar and select **Profile** from the menu. You will not be able to change your First name, Last name or Student ID on the **About me** tab but you can complete the fields in the **Contact Information** and **General** tabs.

The screenshot shows the Mahara user interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the Mahara logo and a search bar. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Profile' with a sub-tab 'About me'. The 'About me' tab contains a message: 'Please go to your profile page to arrange the information you wish to display to others. Enter your real first and last name here. If you want to show a different name to people in the system, put that name in as your display name.' Below this message are four input fields: 'First name' (containing 'Marion'), 'Last name' (containing 'Testing'), 'Student ID' (empty), and 'Display name' (empty). There is also a section for 'Account roles' showing 'No special roles'. At the bottom of the main content area is an 'Introduction' section with a rich text editor. The right sidebar contains several widgets: 'Marion Testing' with a profile picture, 'People online' (Last 30 minutes), 'Tags' (You have not tagged anything yet), and 'Links and resources' (University website, Mahara Users' Group, Mahara Manual, Toolkit, Careers Centre, Turnitin Help).

Completing About me in profile

When complete, click **Save profile**.

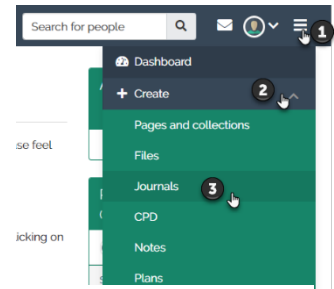
Journals

This resource covers the steps required to create a personal blog that is designed to be shared. Creating a blog in Mahara begins with a 'journal' - which you can think of as a diary - when you put it online it becomes a blog.

In Mahara, select **Journals** from the **Create** menu (follow the numbered steps opposite).

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You will find you already have access to one journal bearing your student ID. At this point you have a choice: you can either **edit the existing journal** or **create a new one**. This guide covers both these approaches in the sections below.

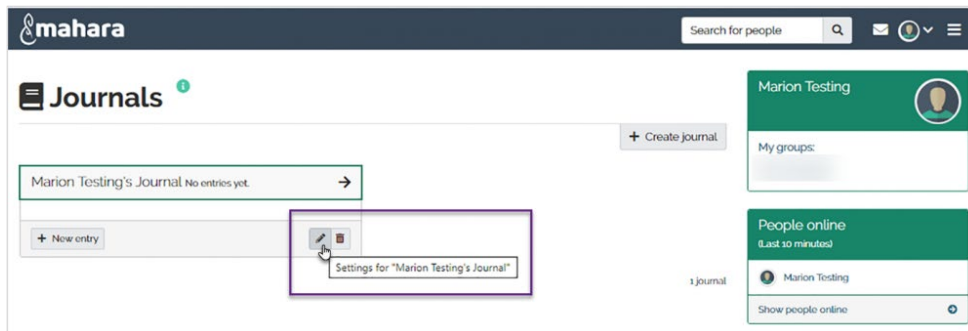


Selecting Journals from the Mahara Create tab

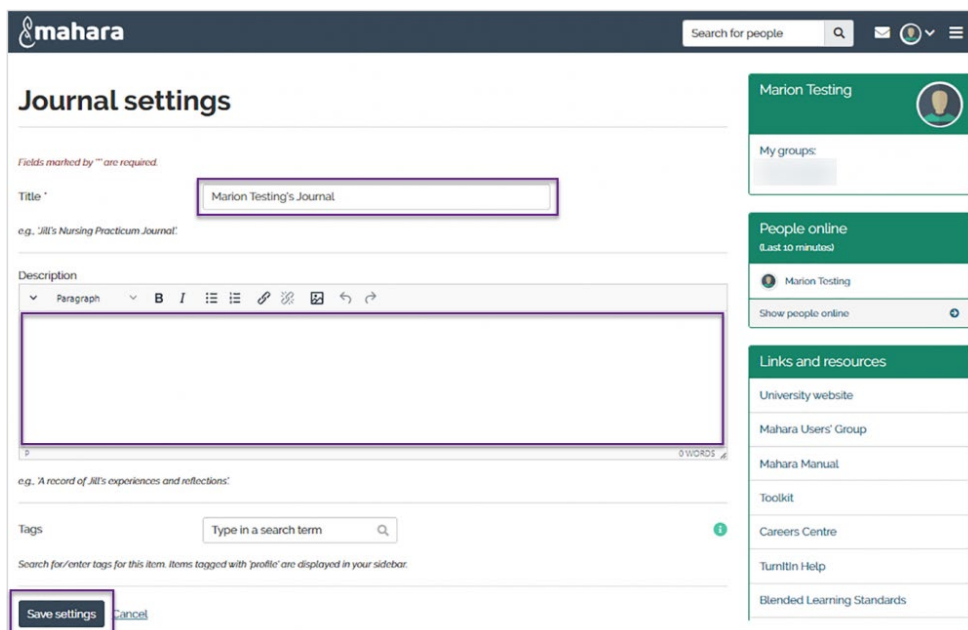
Using the default journal

To edit the existing journal, you should click on the journal title, then **Settings**.

At this point you can rename the title of the journal, add a description of the contents and add tags to aid searching for the journal.



Button for accessing journal settings



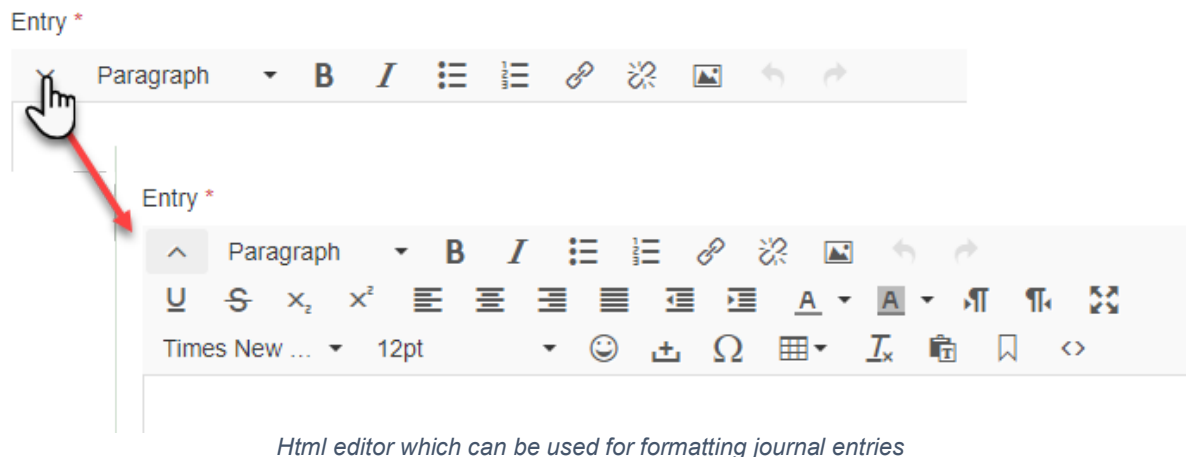
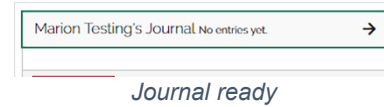
Journals settings screen

When complete, click **Save settings**.

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The journal is now ready for content to be added. To do so, click on **+ New entry** (shown opposite)

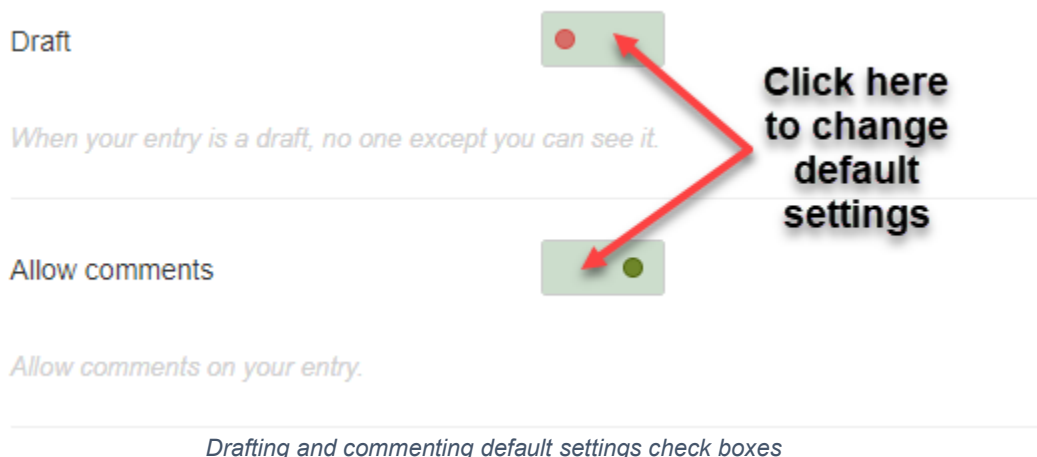
The journal entry screen has a full html editor, so can accept links, files, multi-media and allows for formatting of any sort. To open the full editor, click on the downwards arrow at the left of the screen.



Html editor which can be used for formatting journal entries

When you have added a title, content, and any additional files, you are asked if you wish to keep the post in draft format (not the default setting) – this would mean that even those with shared access to your blog could not see it; you are also asked if you will allow comments on your post (the default is to allow comments).

To change either of these default settings, click on the green area (below)



When complete, click **Save entry**

Creating a new journal

Alternatively, if you wish to create a journal from scratch, in Content > Journals, click on **+ Create journal** (below)

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Journals

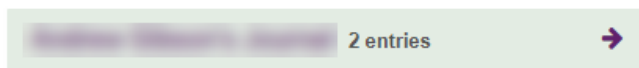


Create journal button

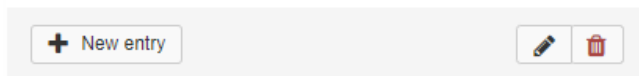
Give your journal a **title**, **description** and searchable **tag/s**, then click **Create journal**.

When you are returned to the Journals screen, you will see your new journal listed (shown in the red box opposite). To start adding content click on the **+ New entry** button.

Journals



This journal will form the basis of my blog for this semester.



Screen showing title of newly created journal - which will be used for blogging

Further guidance: Create a journal

Further guidance on how to create a journal can be found by following:

<https://manual.mahara.org/en/20.04/content/journal.html>

Table of Contents

- 4.10. Journals
 - 4.10.1. Change your journal settings
 - 4.10.2. Add a journal entry
 - 4.10.3. Add an image into a journal entry
 - 4.10.4. Add a file as attachment to a journal entry
 - 4.10.5. Work with multiple journals

Previous topic

4.9. Files

Next topic

4.11. Notes

Quick search

Enter search terms

Mahara manuals

- 21.10
- 21.04
- 20.10

4.10. Journals

Main menu → Create → Journals

The **Journal** is a tool with which you can record your thoughts and experiences online. By adding your journal or individual posts of it to a page you can allow others to place feedback and comments on it. Thus, you can create a dialogue with your audience.

Per default, everyone has one journal available. You can also have multiple journals.

Screenshot of additional Mahara guidance

Displaying a blog on a page

In order to use a journal as the basis for a blog, you must add it to a web page created within Mahara (journals cannot be shared directly). Only pages can be shared.

To do this select **Pages and collections** from the **Create** menu.

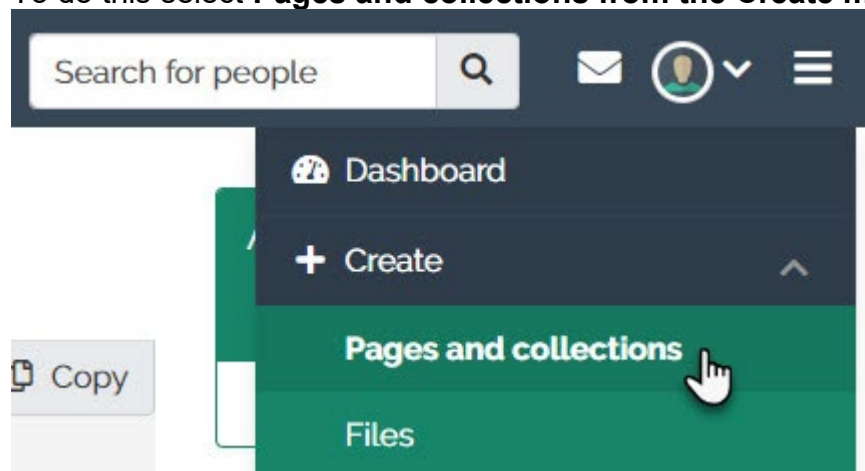


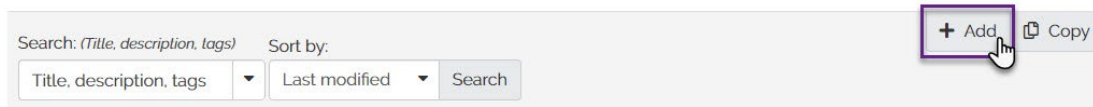
Image showing Pages and collections function in Mahara

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Add a page

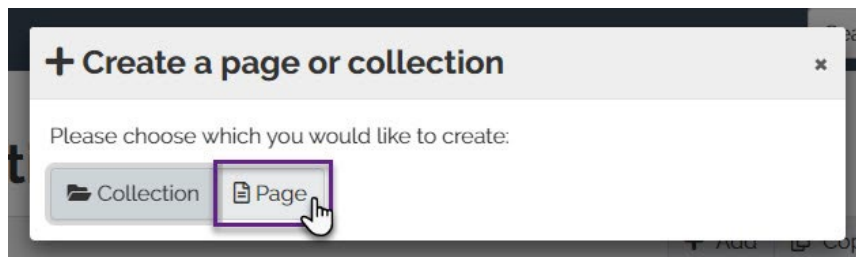
Our next step is to click on **+ Add**.

Pages and collections i



Add button - showing how you would create a new page or collection

From the pop up choose **Page**.



Selecting page or collection from the Create a page or collection options

This leads to a screen where you can enter page settings.

You should name the page and add some basic information.

This page will essentially become your blog, pulling in the content from the journal you created.

Name your blog page something appropriate, such as 'Semester 1 blog'.

You can add in a **description** and **tag** the page if you want, then click **Save**.

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The screenshot shows the Mahara interface for setting up a new page. The header includes the Mahara logo and a search bar. The main heading is 'Untitled v.2 | Settings'. Below this, a note states 'Fields marked by * are required.' The 'Basics' section contains the following fields:

- Page title ***: A text input field containing 'Untitled v.2'.
- Page description**: A large text area for entering a description.
- Tags**: A search input field with the placeholder text 'Type in a search term' and a search icon. Below it, a note reads: 'Search for/enter tags for this item. Items tagged with 'profile' are displayed in your sidebar.'

Below the 'Basics' section are two expandable sections: 'Advanced' and 'Skin'. A 'Save' button is located at the bottom left of the form.

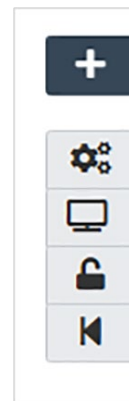
Page 'Basics' screen - details you need to fill in for your new page

Layout

Note: The next screen you see is a particularly important one - this is where you will link your journal with your blog. You are presented with a blank page where you can display your blog.

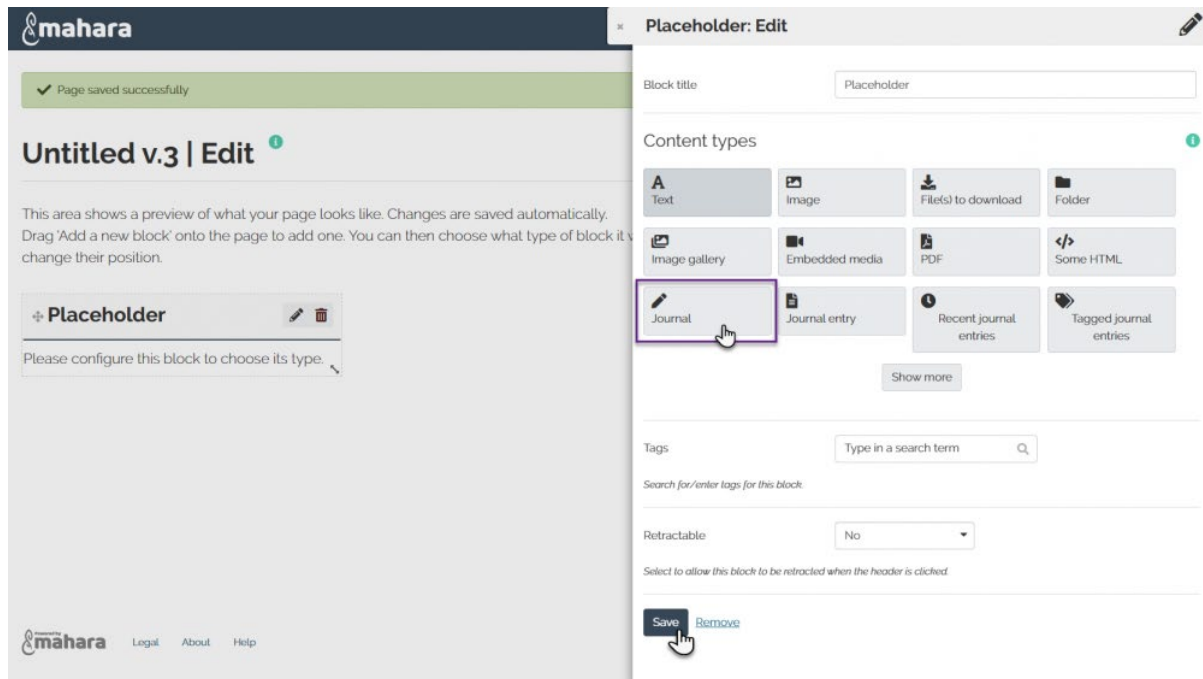
To add the journal to the page, **drag the plus sign (+)** at the top right of the screen (shown opposite) onto the blank space.

When you see a rectangle with a faint border appear, they should release the mouse and the journal will be placed at this spot. A side panel appears where they can enter a title for the journal. Underneath that, there are 4 content types shown and they should click on **Show more** until they see the Journal button (see below).



+ for adding a journal to a page

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Content types - Journal

Having selected Journal, the side panel changes and you should choose the journal you wish to display. It is also good to change the number of entries to be displayed on the page (50 in the example opposite).

When satisfied, you should click **Save** at the foot of the side panel.



Entries per page (50)

You will now see the journal you selected is listed in your blog page. You can position your cursor in the header area of the journal and drag it to reposition it on the page (shown opposite). You are also able to adjust the size of the block by dragging the right or bottom edge.

You can add many more widgets to your blog page (images, media, etc.).

Note: It's important to remember that images, media, links, etc. can be added to any

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individual blog post – so this isn't the only chance you will have to make your blog appealing.

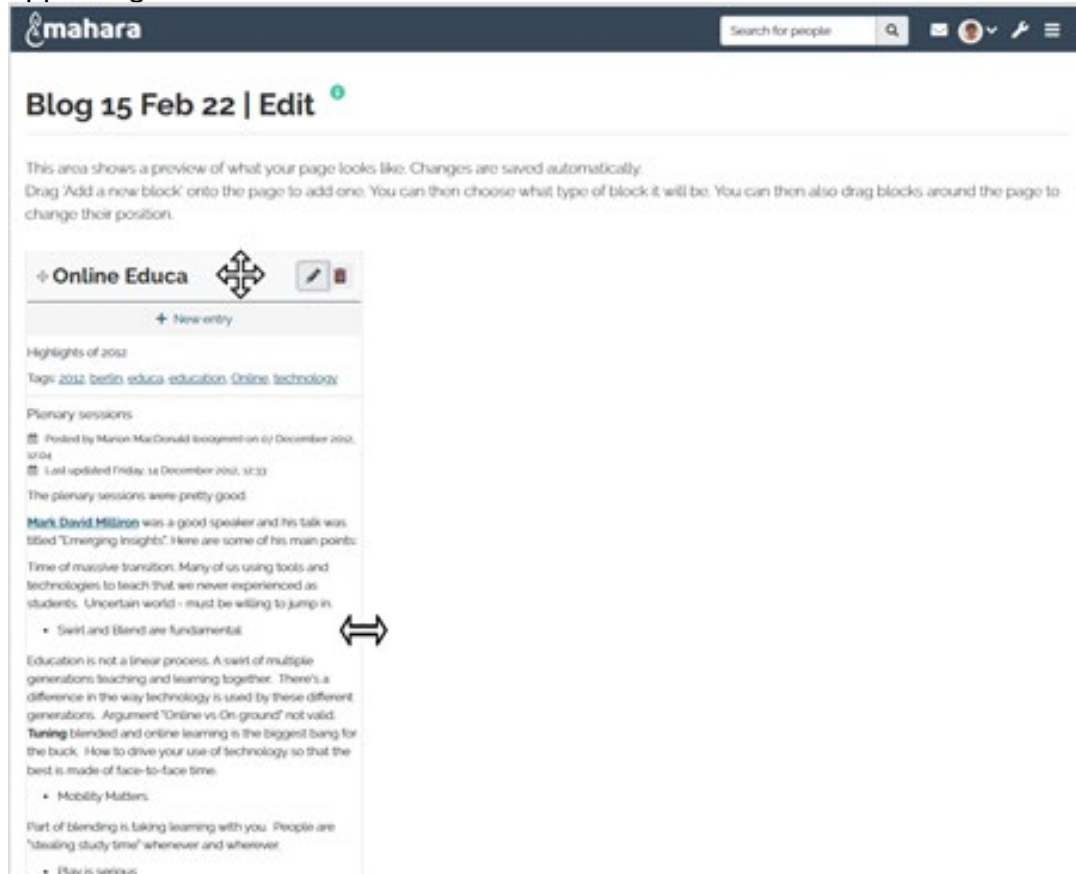


Image showing blog position on blog page

At this point you are ready to start blogging.

Further guidance: Displaying a blog on a page

Further guidance on how to display a journal/blog can be found by following:

- [How do I? Journals](#)
- [How do I? Pages](#)

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The screenshot shows a Mahara help page. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the UHI logo on the left, a search bar with the text 'Search for people', and icons for email, user profile, and a menu. Below the header, the page title is 'Mahara Help - August 2020'. A navigation bar indicates 'You are on page 5/5' with left and right arrows and a magnifying glass icon. The main content area has the title 'How do I? Journals' and is attributed to 'Mahara Admin'. Below the title, there are tags: 'August 2020', 'FAQs', 'Help', and 'Mahara'. A section titled 'Description' is followed by a list of links, each with a dropdown arrow: 'Create a journal', 'Allow someone to view my journal', 'Place a Journal on a page', 'Add content to a journal', and 'Different ways to display journal on a page'. A purple arrow points to the dropdown arrows with the text 'Use the dropdown list above to go to other pages.' At the bottom of the page, it says 'How do I? Journals page'.

Sharing a blog

The final stage in the blogging process is sharing. By default, all journals/blogs/pages are private – they will only be shared if the user decides.

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To share a blog, begin by selecting **Pages and collections** from the **Create** menu.

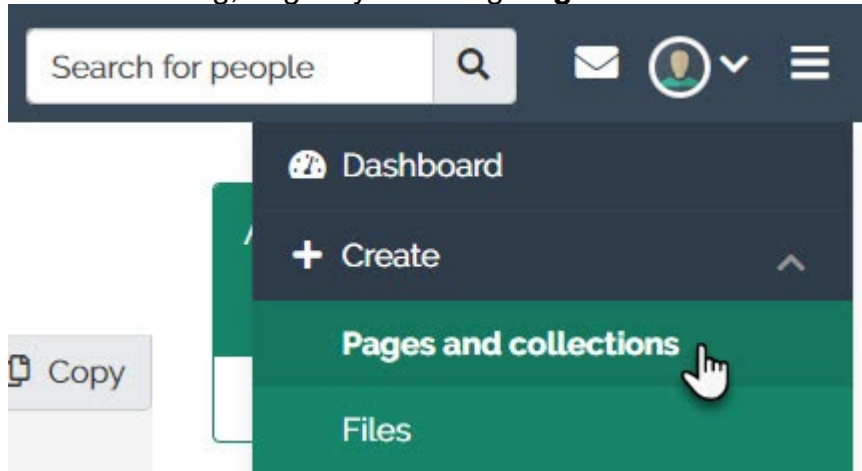


Image showing Pages and collections function in Mahara

Selecting a page

You should **click on the padlock at the bottom left of the page you wish to share** followed by **Manage Access**.

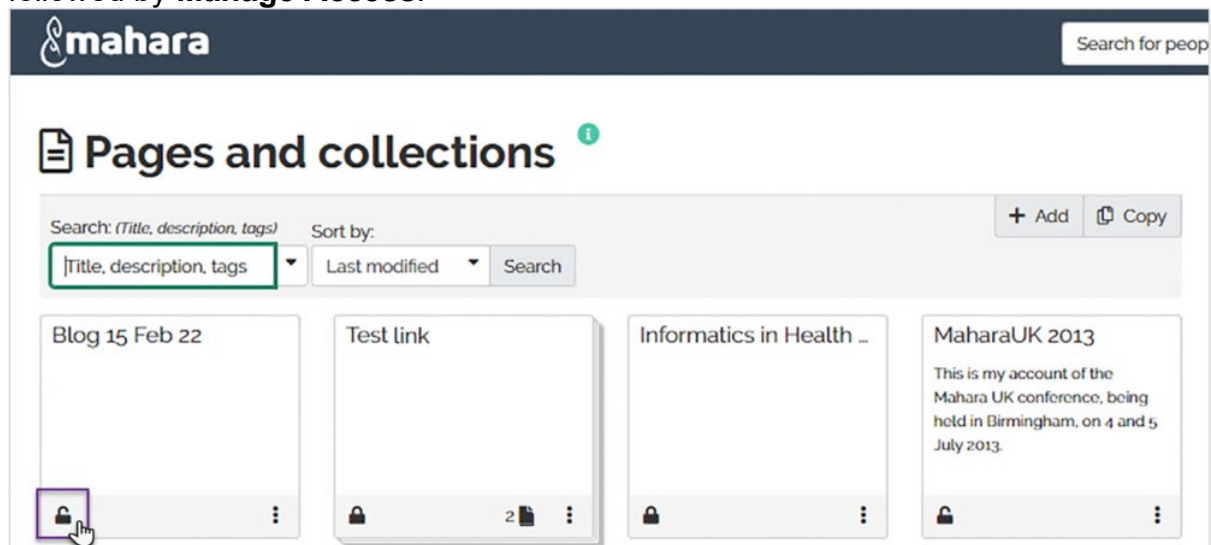


Image showing how to select a blog and manage access

Sharing

Clicking Manage Access takes you to the **Edit access** screen.

From here you can either create a 'secret URL' – a link you can share, or you can use the drop down 'Share with' menu to select individuals or groups.

If appropriate, check your assignment instructions as to how your tutor wants you to share your blog.

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Untitled v.3 | Edit access

Secret URLs

+ New secret URL

Secret URLs

https://mahara.uhi.ac.uk/view/view.php?t-kcGgsX15FdoKBCwoJSy2

Share with others

Advanced options

SHARED WITH FROM TO COMMENTS ALLOW MODERATE

Person Search

Share with Who do you want to share with?

Save Cancel

Edit access screen - where users can create a secret url and/or share with individuals and groups

When complete, click **Save**.

Further guidance: Sharing a page

Further guidance on how to share a blog can be found by following:

- [How do I? Sharing](#)

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The screenshot shows a Mahara help page with a dark blue header containing the UHI logo, a search bar, and navigation icons. Below the header, the page title is 'Mahara Help - August 2020' and the current page is 'You are on page 3/5'. The main heading is 'How do I? Sharing' by Mahara Admin, with tags for August 2020, FAQs, Help, and Mahara. The 'Description' section is empty, with a purple arrow pointing to a dropdown menu and the text 'Use the dropdown list above to go to other pages.' Below this are four menu items: 'Share a page with a tutor', 'Submit a page for assessment', 'Share a page with a group', and 'Get a secret link to let a person view a page'. At the bottom, a small text block states 'Updated on 18 January 2022, 14:19: 41 page visits from 5 August 2020 to 5 May 2022'.

UHI Search for people

Mahara Help - August 2020 You are on page 3/5

How do I? Sharing

by Mahara Admin
Tags: August 2020, FAQs, Help, Mahara

Description

Use the dropdown list above to go to other pages.

- Share a page with a tutor
- Submit a page for assessment
- Share a page with a group
- Get a secret link to let a person view a page

Updated on 18 January 2022, 14:19: 41 page visits from 5 August 2020 to 5 May 2022

Screenshot of UHI Mahara guidance on sharing a page with a mentor or tutor