Learning Portfolio Quick Start Guide

What is Loop Reflect?

Loop Reflect is a learning portfolio platform available to all DCU students and faculty. The digital portfolio makes learning visible through the creation of a personalised and reflective living showcase of academic, professional, and personal achievements. This online portfolio can be shared with peers, teachers, employers and others supporting life-long and life-wide learning. It is based on the open source tool Mahara.


This Guide

This guide will show you how to do some of the basic tasks in Loop Reflect including managing files, using the Journal, how to start creating pages using a range of content, and how to share these pages with others.

Logging in to Loop Reflect

Login to Loop Reflect at **reflect.dcu.ie** using your usual Loop username and password or access via the **Quick links** section in Loop.
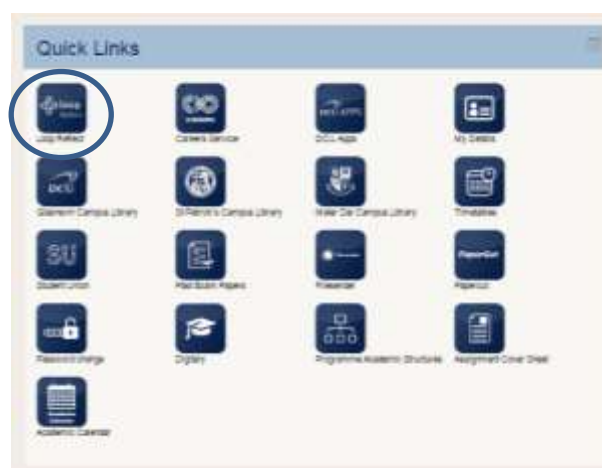
Create

Getting Started - Your Profile

When you log into Loop Reflect for the first time, you will want to complete your Profile. This information will display to others within Reflect. To do so, click on '**Create'** then '**Profile'**. Input your information. Click '**Save profile'**

Next you can select '**Profile pictures'**; you can add an image by clicking on **'Choose File'**, select your picture and then choose **'Upload'**. Click on the **'Default'** button.

Getting Started – Files

Click on the '**Files'** tab. The '**Files'** area is a repository for folders and files to use within your portfolio. Examples may be Word or Excel files, Images, Videos or other documents.

The number of files you may upload into your files area is dependent on your file storage limit which is displayed in the quota box in the sidebar. DCU learners have a 50.0MB quota.
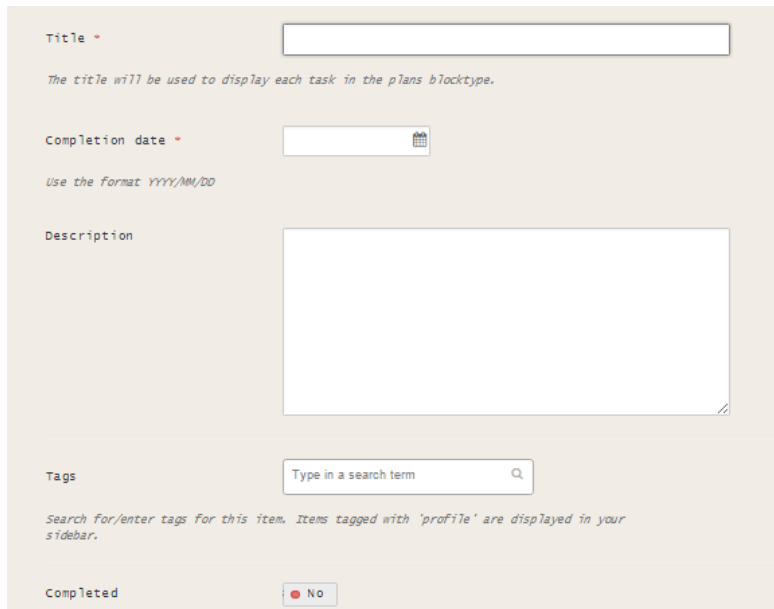
To upload files, you can drag-and-drop them into the '**Drop files here to upload'** section of this page. You can also click on the '**Choose Files'** button to browse and upload files.

Getting Started - The Journal

The journal can be used to record a sequence of thoughts, experiences and reflections. By default every learner has one learning journal in Loop Reflect. Reflective writing is an important part of learning and assessment. Advice on how to write reflectively is provided on the Loop Reflect Resources page online.

Click **'New entry'** to post a new entry in your journal
Give your entry a '**Title'** and add some content in the '**Entry'** box
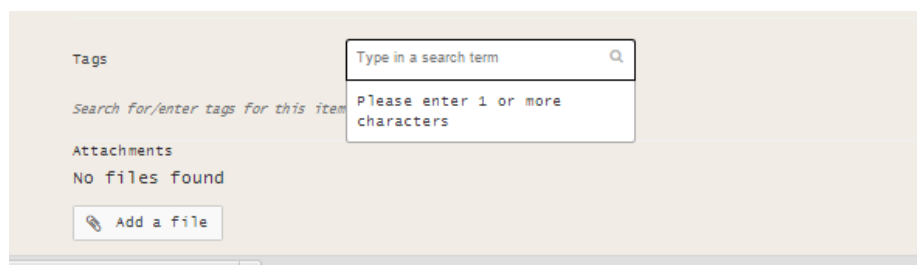
You have the option to give your entry some tags demonstrate your achievement of DCU Graduate Attributes, module learning outcomes, or other elements. Simply start to type into the box. For more information, Click the Graduate Attributes link in the header section of Loop Reflect

Note, you can also attach files to your learning journal entry.

Checking the '**draft**' checkbox will see your entry saved but not published; this is unchecked by default. Users can comment on your journal entry unless you uncheck the box to set this otherwise.

Click '**Save entry**'

Getting Started - CV

The CV section allows you to create an online curriculum vitae. Later you can choose to either publish your entire CV, or individual components of it, to your portfolio to share with a teacher, employer or awarding body.

None of the fields under Personal information are required. You can choose to include as much or as little information as you wish. For example the date of birth and gender fields are entirely optional and are not required.

Getting Started - Plans

Loop Reflect Plans enable the user to create simple To-Do lists. A plan can consist of a range of different tasks, each with a different date associated with it.

The sequence of event is:

1. Create a '**New Plan'** and add a '**Description'**
2. Add '**New task'**

3. Add further tasks as required

Note you can edit and update tasks in a plan, add tags, and mark a task as complete.

Notes are created when you add a text box to a Loop Reflect page. Although you can't create them in the 'Create' section of Reflect, you can edit and delete them in this view

Organise

A learning portfolio page is your way of demonstrating your learning. A page is a collection of resources that are presented together in one place which can then be shared with other users. These resources can include text, embedded files, images, videos, links to resources. Typically, the are used for assessment purposes but can also be shared with employers or awarding bodies to showcase skills and achievements. In Loop Reflect, you can create as many pages as you wish.

A page is created by adding a collection of blocks to an empty portfolio page. These blocks can include text, images, files, video, RSS feeds, journal entries and profile information. Once set up, the page can then be named and allocated its own access permissions – from an individual user, groups, teacher and external parties.

Creating a page

Click on the '**Organise**' tab in the middle of the Dashboard which will display any pages that you have previously created.
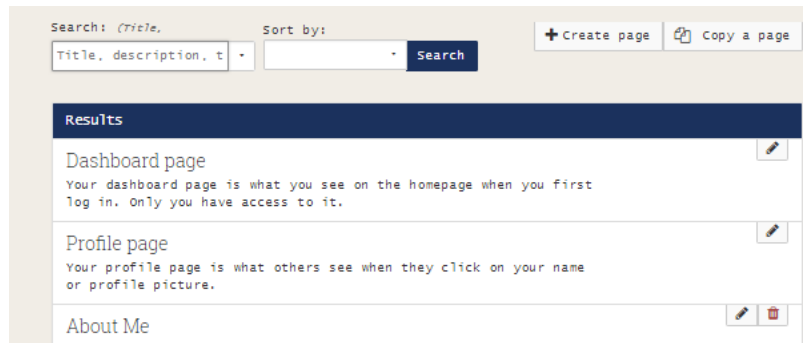
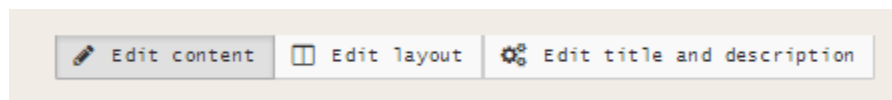You create a page from scratch by clicking on the '**Create page**' button or if a template has been provided to you by your teacher, choose to '**Copy a page**'. Review the pages that are available to you and click the icon [icon] to copy. Whether you choose to copy or start from scratch, you will need to rename the page and add a description. Choose '**Save**' then you are ready to edit.

If you have chosen to use a template, the layout will have been pre-specified for you and you can choose to '**Edit content**'

If you have chosen a blank page, the layout by default will be in 3 columns. If you wish to change this, click on '**Edit layout**' or if you are satisfied with this choose '**Edit content**'

Edit Layout

Here you can decide how you would like your page content to be presented. (The default layout is 3 columns of equal width). Select your preferred layout or review the Advanced Options beneath and click '**Save**'.
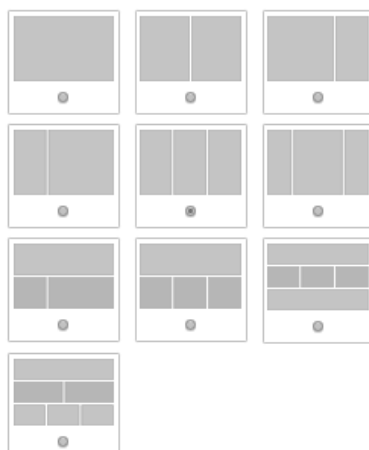
Adding content to a page

With the layout of the page pre-specified or chosen by you, the next step is to add content.

Drag your selected block to the section where you want it displayed on the page. The text box and the image blocks are two of the more frequently used content items. However, you can access all other content items via the panel too:

- Media: holds blocks for files that can be displayed for download or images and videos embedded directly in the page
- Journals: various content blocks which allow you to place your journals / journal entries into a page
- General: Navigation bars, Notes, Creative Commons licences etc
- Personal info: choose profile information or your CV to display in a block
- External: contains blocks to place RSS feeds, or GoogleApps documents. Youtube, Slideshare, Vimeo, Prezi etc urls or embed codes can be added here.

When adding a block:
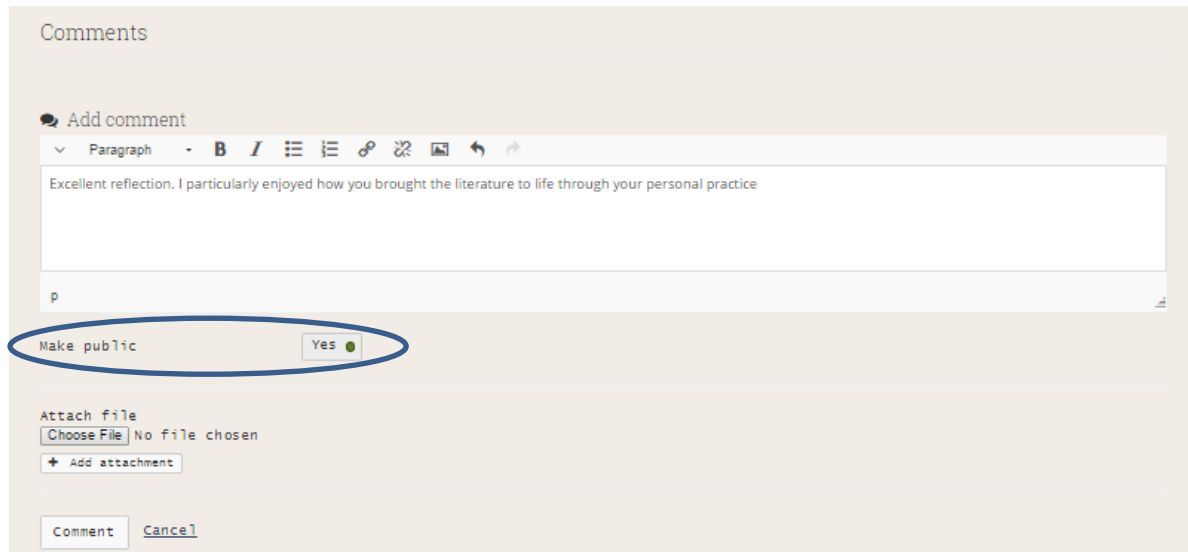1. Click on the selected block item and drag it onto the page area
2. You can then add a block title and some content
3. Click on **'Save'**

Your block should then appear in the page preview area. You can go back and edit the content at any time by using the configure icon .

Click **'Display Page'** to preview how your page will look. You can alter the layout at any point via the **'Edit layout'** tab.

Feedback

It is possible to leave feedback on the portfolios of others via the Comments section that sits at the bottom of the page. Feedback and comments are visible when you display a page but not when you are editing the page. You may choose to make this feedback public or private to the individual.
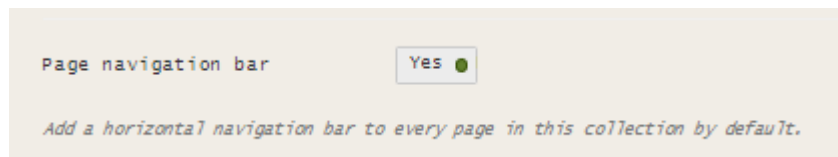

Turning Pages into Collections

A collection is a set of pages that are linked to one another and have the same access permissions. You can create as many collections as you like, but a page cannot appear in more than one collection. In effect, this creates a website of your work, accessed through a single URL, and supports structured navigation through the pages. This is particularly useful for producing a portfolio of evidence for teachers or potential employers.

To create a collection, click the **'Collections'** tab and click on **'New Collection'**
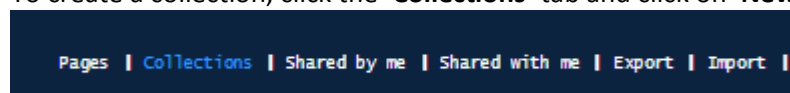
You will need to name your collection and add a description and tags if you wish. Be sure to add a navigation bar for easier navigation for you and those viewing the collection/website.

Next you can add pages to a collection by dragging pages from the left hand pane to the right or select and click on **'Add pages'**. Then you can use the arrows to reorder the pages as you wish them to display
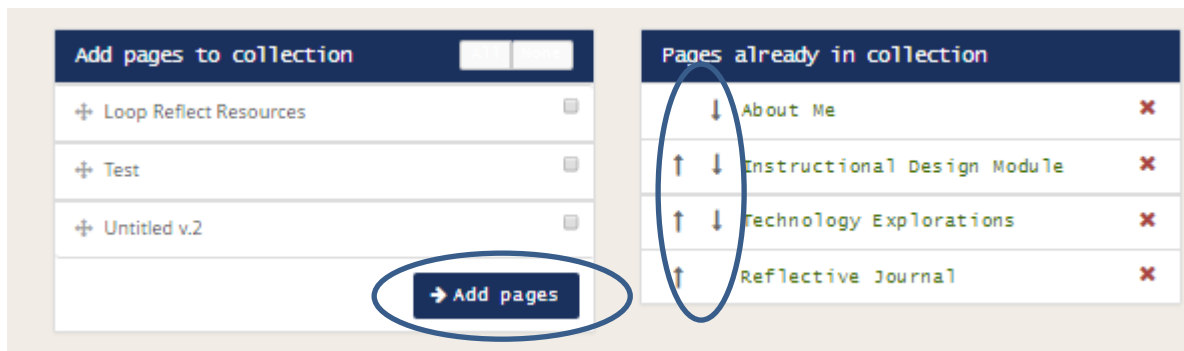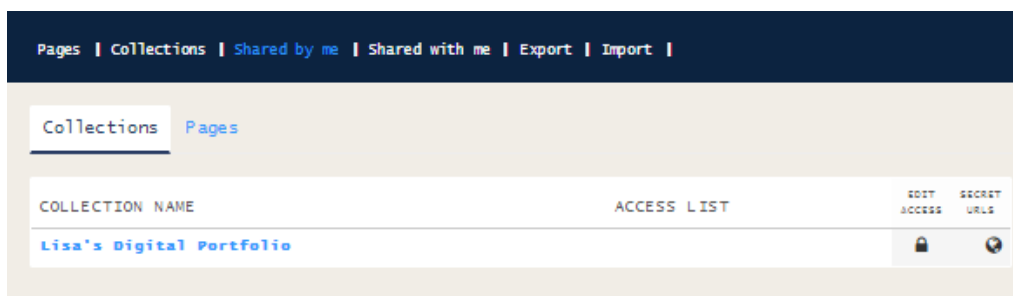
Click on the title of the collection to view it as it would appear to others.
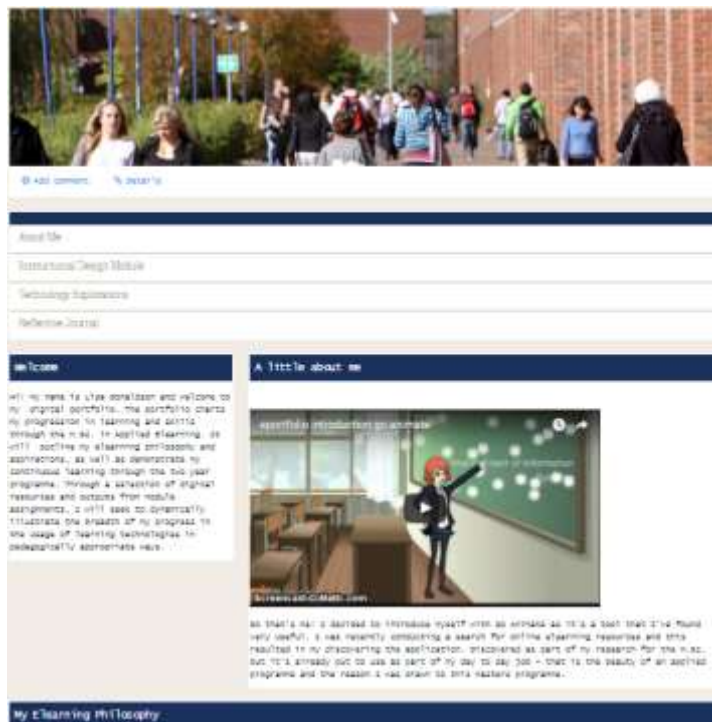
Share

When your page or collection is complete, you may wish to share that with your teacher, prospective employer or awarding body.

To do so, click on '**Share'** from the main Dashboard page or select **'Shared by me'** if you are within the Organise section.

Switch to the '**Collections'** or '**Pages'** subtab depending on what it is you wish to share. If you wish to share your portfolio pages with someone external to DCU and who does not have Loop Reflect access, you can use '**Secret URL's'**


Select this and click on **'New secret URL'**

Loop Reflect will generate a URL that you can share with others for feedback or as a showcase of your skills. Click on the copy icon to copy to your clipboard or use the pencil icon to control the time span that the link will work.

If you wish to share a page or collection with a group, for example your classmates, select the page or collection and click the **'Edit Access'** option. The next screen will allow you to choose from different groups – your class, your programme, your school or your faculty.
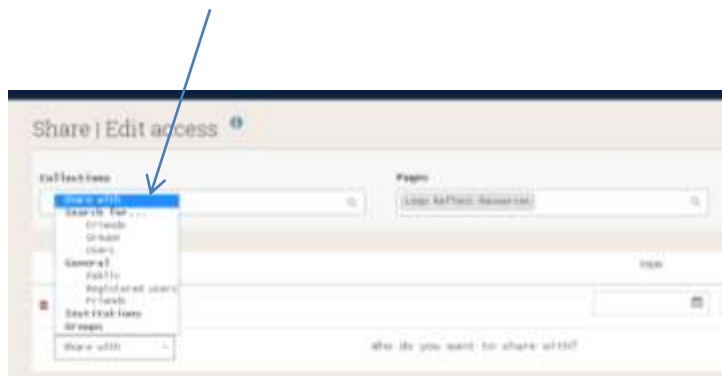
Submitting an Assignment

It is very straightforward to submit a portfolio page or collection to your teacher as part of an assessment.

In Loop, access your module and find the relevant assignment submission icon

9
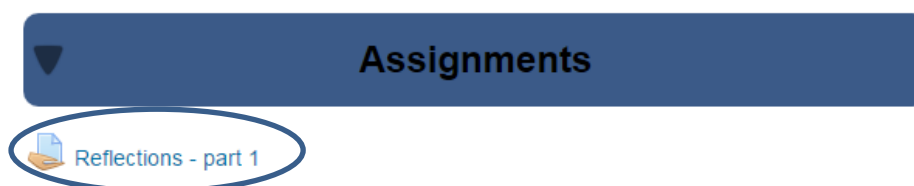
When you click the assignment, you will be presented with the pages and collections that you have created in Loop Reflect. Select which pages or collections you wish to submit. Choose the relevant page and click **'Submit'**.

Please note that once pages are submitted they are locked for editing. Following grading and feedback the pages will be released to you again should you wish to make changes.

Further support

We hope you enjoy working with Loop Reflect and find it a simple and valuable tool to showcase your skills and experience. Video tutorials and other resources are available to you via the Tutorials link in the footer of Loop Reflect.

If you have technical issues with Loop Reflect, please contact the ISS Helpdesk.
If you have other queries and cannot find a solution through the Loop Reflect resources provided online, please contact lisa.donaldson@dcu.ie