STUDENT GUIDE

Welcome to *Sophia Pathways[TM]*!

We recognize that people learn in a variety of ways, so we've made each concept available for you to learn in a way that makes sense to you. We're glad you've chosen *Sophia* to take the next step in planning your educational journey and significantly reducing the cost of your college tuition.

Your *Sophia Pathways[TM]* online college course is designed to be completed in 60 days or less. You may start at any time and learn on your own schedule. There are no classes to attend or weekly assignments to complete.

Using *Sophia* courses to earn college credit and lower the cost of your college education is simple:

- Dive right into problem solving mode with our Challenges, learning new concepts along the way through our instructional video tutorials, authored by multiple course instructors
- Successfully complete timed Milestones, demonstrating your mastery of the concepts
- Apply your mastery to create project-based Touchstone deliverables which you then submit for manual grading
- Submit your final score and we will take care of sending transcripts to your school

HOW IT WORKS

To earn a Sophia transcript you must:

- Complete each Challenge, Milestone and Touchstone by getting at least half of the points in each assessment
- Achieve a total average score of 70% or better across all Challenges, Milestones and Touchstones

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?

Sophia courses are based on a problem solving learning model. You can expect to engage in real world scenarios. To assist you in solving these Challenges, we provide multiple video tutorials that help you understand the key concepts behind each problem.

Each Challenge encompasses 7-10 practical problems to solve. You have multiple attempts to solve these problems and you may leave and return to Challenges whenever you want to continue your learning and improve your score (as long as you have remaining attempts). You must get at least half of the Challenge questions correct in a Unit in order to advance to the Milestone for that Unit.

WHAT IS A MILESTONE?

Milestones test your mastery of the concepts taught in the course. Each Milestone consists of 25 questions. You have a set amount of time to complete each Milestone, which is displayed on the Course Dashboard. You must get at least half of the questions correct to pass—but keep in mind that you need to average 70% across all Challenges, Milestones, and Touchstones. Milestones are weighted twice as much as Challenges for the purpose of calculating your final score. You will only be given one chance to pass a Milestone.

Each Milestone has a corresponding Practice Milestone that you can use to check your readiness before attempting the actual Milestone. You'll find similar questions to the actual Milestone, along with answers.

WHAT IS A TOUCHSTONE?

A Touchstone is a project-based assessment that helps you apply mastery of the concepts to solve an authentic problem. Each Touchstone consists of a project-based deliverable. Each Touchstone is checked for originality and then submitted for manual grading. You can work on a Touchstone whenever you want. However, you must get at least half of the Milestone questions correct before you can submit the Touchstone for that Unit for grading. Please be aware that it could take up to seven business days to get a Touchstone grade back. You must get at least half of the available points to pass a Touchstone—but keep in mind that you need to average 70% across all Challenges, Milestones, and Touchstones to pass the course. You will only be given one chance to pass a Touchstone.

STUDENTS HONOR CODE

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense in any academic community. At *Sophia*, failure to comply with the student honor code will result in removal from the course, and/or disqualification to enroll in future courses. By participating in *Sophia Pathways^{TM}*, students must abide by the following honor code:

- The answers to all assessments, which include Challenges, Milestones and Touchstones, will be your work and your work alone.
- You will not make questions or answers to Challenges, Milestones or Touchstones available to anyone else.
- You will not engage in any other activities that could dishonestly improve your results or improve or hinder the results of others.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENT

Challenges:

- Read through each of the questions in the Challenge first so that you have a general idea of what to look for as you watch tutorials.
- View all the tutorials linked to the Challenges. They can be found under the tab "Helpful Tutorials" to the right of the Challenge "Question" tab and provide the information needed to complete that Challenge.
- Take notes on the tutorials as you watch them and write down key terms and definitions, processes, diagrams, etc.
- Use our "Many Ways to Learn^{TM}" format to view tutorials from various instructors. This will allow you to find the instructor that you prefer based on your learning style.
- Use your notes to complete the Challenge questions.
- If you struggle with a concept you may contact a Learning Coach via live chat, phone or email for assistance.

Milestones:

- Review all Challenges prior to taking the Milestone.
- Print off and complete the Practice Milestone before attempting the actual Milestone.
- Grade yourself on the Practice Milestone using the answer key provided.
- Review tutorials related to the concepts you got incorrect on the Practice Milestone.
- If you continue to struggle with a concept, contact a Learning Coach for assistance.
- Take the Milestone at a time and location when you can have sufficient undisturbed time, so you can focus on completing the Milestone successfully.
- Milestones are 'open book', so have two browser windows or tabs open. Use one for viewing relevant tutorials, and the other for the Milestone.

Touchstones:

- Review the Touchstone description thoroughly at the start of the Unit in order to understand the requirements.
- Give yourself enough time to develop your Touchstone over a few days as you go through the Unit, versus attempting to rush through it in one sitting.
- Familiarize yourself with the scoring rubric to understand how the Touchstone will be graded.
- Review the Touchstone support concepts to refresh the unit concepts that you mastered while working on Challenges and Milestone.
- Look at the Sample Touchstone to understand the desired look and feel of the end product.
- If you are unclear about any section of the Touchstone, contact a Learning Coach for assistance.
- Before you submit a Touchstone, proofread and make appropriate edits.
- Touchstone submittals are checked for originality and manually graded. If a Touchstone is determined to contain plagiarized content then it will be rejected and you will be given a single opportunity to submit an original version.

EXTENSION POLICY

We want you to be successful in learning your academic subject. If you do not complete your *Sophia* course in the allotted 60 days, we do grant one extension, not to exceed 30 days, at no additional cost. To qualify for the extension you will need to set weekly learning goals, and agree to an Extension Contract, including weekly Learning Check-ins. You will see a link in your course to request an extension, if you are running out of time. Please contact a Learning Coach at learningcoach@sophia.org with any questions on your course extension.

30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

We want you to be completely satisfied with your learning experience. We offer a 30-day money back guarantee prior to completion. Please contact a Learning Coach at learningcoach@sophia.org to drop your course and receive a full refund within your first 30 days of the course.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE *SOPHIA PATHWAYS*^TM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

CHAT FEATURE ("Questions? Lets Chat")
Learning Coaches are available via this Live Chat feature during our office hours.

PROGRESS AND SCORE INDICATORS
Track your progress! Your Course Dashboard Page provides real time feedback on your progress to help you stay on track. The Progress Bar gives you a recommended schedule to ensure a successful completion. The Score indicator plots your current score against the 70% passing mark. The View Report page provides more details on your activity and progress throughout the course.

COMPETENCY UNITS
Each Competency Unit will have three Challenge Assessments, one Milestone Assessment, and one Touchstone Assessment. Start with the Challenges in each Unit in order to successfully unlock the Milestone for that Unit. Successfully complete the Milestone in order to unlock the Touchstone.

STUDY GUIDE
The Study Guide provides a single location for all the instructional tutorials for that Unit. It is a great resource for you to find all the concepts you need to learn for the Challenges and the Milestone.

TUTORIALS TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE QUESTIONS
Each concept is taught by multiple instructors, so learn from the teacher you like best, or whose instructional method matches your learning style.