



Student Guide

WELCOME TO SOPHIA LEARNING

[HOW IT WORKS](#)

[WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?](#)

[WHAT IS A MILESTONE?](#)

[WHAT IS A TOUCHSTONE?](#)

[WHAT IS THE FINAL MILESTONE?](#)

[BEST PRACTICES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENT](#)

[STUDENT HONOR CODE & POLICIES](#)

[RETAKE POLICY](#)

[THE LEARNER SUPPORT TEAM](#)

[30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE](#)

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SOPHIA LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

[CHAT FEATURE - \("Questions? Let's Chat"\)](#)

[PROGRESS AND SCORE INDICATORS](#)

[THIRD-PARTY TUTORING FROM BRAINFUSE](#)

[SCIENCE LABS](#)

[MEASUREMENT CONVERSIONS](#)

[REQUESTING YOUR TRANSCRIPT](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

WELCOME TO SOPHIA LEARNING

We're glad you've chosen Sophia Learning to take the next step in planning your educational journey and significantly reducing the cost of your college tuition.

Your Sophia online college course is designed to be self-paced. Sophia courses are intended for you to complete independently, using only the materials presented in the course. 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 to knock out your gen eds with affordable, self-paced college-level courses is simple:

- Dive right into problem solving mode with our Challenges, learning new concepts along the way through our instructional tutorials.
- Successfully complete timed Milestones, demonstrating your mastery of the concepts.
- Successfully complete Touchstones, showing your ability to apply the course concepts to written or project-based tasks.
- Successfully complete the Final Milestone, demonstrating your retention of key course concepts.
- Submit your final score, and we will provide you with instructions on requesting your official transcript.

HOW IT WORKS

To earn a Sophia transcript, you must:

- Complete each Challenge by attempting each of the questions.
- Complete each Milestone and Touchstone, which contribute to your overall course score.
- Achieve a total average score of 70% or better across all Challenges, Milestones, and Touchstones.
- Complete your Final Milestone, which contributes to your overall course score.

WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?

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

Each Challenge encompasses an average of 5-10 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 attempt all of the Challenge questions at least once 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 20-30 questions on average. You have a set amount of time to complete each Milestone, which is displayed on the Course Dashboard. The amount of time you have to complete a Milestone is determined by a number of factors and is not the same across all courses. While there is no minimum required score on an individual Milestone, keep in mind that you need to achieve an average score of 70% across all Challenges and Milestones. Milestones are weighted three times as much as Challenges for the purpose of calculating your final score. You will be given one opportunity to retake each Milestone to improve your score.

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. Note: Some courses may have Touchstones in lieu of Milestones, while others may have both. Your Course Dashboard will display the assessment types you can expect in your course.

WHAT IS A TOUCHSTONE?

For students in certain courses, 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, and all submissions must be unique to the course— you may not submit work you have written for previous courses at Sophia or elsewhere. You can work on a Touchstone whenever you want; however, you must pass the previous assessments in the Unit before you can submit the Touchstone for that Unit for grading. Please refer to the Touchstone instructions page to see the current grading turnaround times. Keep in mind that grading turnaround times should be factored into your timeline as you may be awaiting feedback on a Touchstone and unable to proceed with other coursework. While there is no minimum required score on an individual Touchstone, keep in mind that you must complete each Touchstone as well as achieve an average score of 70% across all assessments to pass the course. You will be given one opportunity to redo each Touchstone if necessary to improve your score.

Some courses have Touchstone Tasks, which are required assignments that give you an opportunity to explore the course material and develop skills that you'll use throughout the course. Although Touchstone Tasks are ungraded and you will not receive feedback, the work required on them will prepare you for success on any graded Touchstone(s). You can work on a Touchstone Task anytime, but you must complete the previous assessments in the Unit before you can submit it. Once you've submitted a Touchstone Task, it will be saved for you to access at any point during the course.

WHAT IS THE FINAL MILESTONE?

Upon successful completion of all Challenges and Milestones, you will be ready to take the Final Milestone. Your overall score in the course must remain at 70% or higher after taking the Final Milestone in order to pass and complete your course. You may be asked to verify your identity with a photo ID before taking the Final Milestone. One-unit courses, as well as certain courses that include Touchstone assignments, may not have a Final Milestone.

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/read 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, or may be displayed on the right side of the question itself, 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™” format to view, read, or listen to tutorials from various instructors. This will allow you to find the instructor or tutorial that you prefer based on your learning style.
- Use your notes to complete the Challenge questions.
- If you struggle with a concept, check to see if that course has the option for a tutor. If tutoring is available, you will see an option to "Access a Tutor" near the top of your course's page. You can find a list here of all of the courses that offer tutoring. If your course does not have tutoring available, reach out to us at support@sophia.org.

Milestones

- Review all Challenges prior to taking the Milestone.
- Complete the Practice Milestone before attempting the actual Milestone.
- Review tutorials related to the concepts you got incorrect on the Practice Milestone.
- If you struggle with a concept, please reach out to us at support@sophia.org.
- Take the Milestone at a time and location when you can have sufficient undisturbed time, so you can focus on completing the Milestone successfully.
- Before you begin a Milestone, check how many questions there are and how much time you have so you can manage your time effectively.
- You may reference Sophia course materials and/or your own study notes (i.e., notes you personally created while studying Sophia content) while taking Milestones. However, unethical or inappropriate use of outside resources—including, but not limited to: generative AI tools, external websites, or other people—is prohibited.

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.
- If you have deadlines with your school or are working quickly, be sure to factor in grading turnaround time for each Touchstone.
- Familiarize yourself with the scoring rubric to understand how the Touchstone will be graded.
- If you are unclear about any section of the Touchstone, contact the Learner Support Team for assistance.
- Before you submit a Touchstone, proofread and make appropriate edits.
- For most courses with Touchstones, tutoring is available via Brainfuse if you wish to receive feedback from a tutor prior to submitting your Touchstone.
- Touchstone submissions are checked for originality and manually graded. If a Touchstone is determined to contain plagiarized content or large amounts of material that you have previously submitted to another

course, it will be rejected and you will be given a single opportunity to submit a new, original version.

- Review the [Ethical Standards and Appropriate Use of AI](#) for guidance on the use of generative AI technology in Touchstones.

STUDENT HONOR CODE & POLICIES

To take a Sophia course, students must abide by the following Honor Code:

- Each student may register for and access only one account. Sharing access credentials or allowing others to access a student's account for any reason is prohibited. Maintaining multiple accounts is considered a violation of this Honor Code.
- You will agree to abide by the [Sophia Academic Integrity Policy](#). Sophia Learning reserves the right to update the Academic Integrity Policy at any time.
- You will agree to abide by the [Sophia Code of Conduct](#) in all your interactions with Sophia Learning, staff of Sophia Learning, and Sophia Learning social media accounts. Sophia Learning reserves the right to update the Code of Conduct at any time.
- You will not engage in any other activities that are not outlined in the above policies that could dishonestly improve your results, improve or hinder the results of others or their experience at Sophia Learning, or bring Sophia Learning, students and staff of Sophia Learning, or Sophia Learning's partner universities into disrepute.

As outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy and the Sophia Code of Conduct, failure to comply with the Sophia Honor Code could result in removal from the course, removal of courses from your transcript, and/or disqualification to enroll in future courses. Full policies and procedures can be found in the attached documents.

The Academic Integrity Policy and Code of Conduct outline appropriate conduct for studying at Sophia and the actions that Sophia can take if you are found to be in violation of these policies. Not having read the policies is not a reason for not following the rules as outlined within them, so we recommend you read them thoroughly before starting at Sophia.

RETAKE POLICY

We allow one (1) retake per Challenge and one (1) retake per Milestone. The system will allow you to retake a unit Milestone after you have completed it. If you need to retake a Challenge please contact the Learner Support Team.

Courses are self-paced. However, a course will automatically drop after 180 days of inactivity. If a course is dropped, you will see the option to re-enroll, which will allow you to retake the course from the beginning.

We allow one retake attempt per course. If you would like to retake a course, please drop the course and re-enroll to start the course from the beginning. If your course was dropped automatically due to inactivity and you would like to reactivate or retake the course, please reach out to the Learner Support Team, who will review your request. Note that restarting or retaking a course will mean taking the most current version of that course,

as the curriculum may be updated over time to reflect changes in the field of study or college-level requirements.

THE LEARNER SUPPORT TEAM

The Sophia Learner Support Team is available via chat, phone, and email to assist learners with non-academic support. Their role is to provide guidance and solutions related to:

- Sophia Learning platform navigation
- Transcript ordering and tracking
- Billing and membership questions
- Account or course access issues
- Administrative policies and procedures

Please note: The Learner Support Team does not provide tutoring or academic assistance. They are not subject matter experts on course content, assignments, or assessments.

30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

We want you to be completely satisfied with your learning experience. We offer a 30-day money back guarantee if no courses have been completed and certified. Please contact the Learner Support Team at support@sophia.org to drop your course and receive a full refund within 30 days of your membership start date.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SOPHIA LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

CHAT FEATURE - (“Questions? Let's Chat”)

Learner Support Representatives are available via the Help Center 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 updates as you complete each assessment so you can keep track of where you are in the course. 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.

THIRD-PARTY TUTORING FROM BRAINFUSE

Since Learner Support Representatives are not subject matter experts, some courses offer additional support through tutoring via Brainfuse*.

You can use Brainfuse to:

- start a tutoring session 24 hours a day,
- schedule a convenient appointment; or,
- ask a question offline.

Visit the [Sophia Help Center](#) to see a full list of courses that feature tutoring support through Brainfuse and to learn more about how tutoring works.

*Brainfuse is a tutoring service that requires engagement on part of the student in a session for the most productive outcomes. Brainfuse tutors are educators and truly want students to be able to leave a session more confident about their ability to complete assignments independently.

SCIENCE LABS

The following science topics include both a lecture course and a lab course. When taken together, the two courses offer a robust investigation and journey into the natural sciences.

- Anatomy and Physiology I (ACE recommends 3 credits)
- Anatomy and Physiology I Lab (ACE recommends 1 credit)
- Anatomy and Physiology II (ACE recommends 3 credits)
- Anatomy and Physiology II Lab (ACE recommends 1 credit)
- Human Biology (ACE recommends 3 credits)
- Human Biology Lab (ACE recommends 1 credit)
- Introduction to Chemistry (ACE recommends 3 credits)
- Introduction to Chemistry Lab (ACE recommends 1 credit)
- Microbiology (ACE recommends 3 credits)
- Microbiology Lab (ACE recommends 1 credit)

It's recommended that you complete each pair of courses simultaneously for the best experience, but please plan ahead. While you can take as many Sophia courses as you'd like each month with your membership, you are only allowed to be active in two courses at a time. Taking a lecture course along with a lab course will occupy your two-course limit.

MEASUREMENT CONVERSIONS

Sophia courses and assessments include units of measurement. Please visit the [Conversions from U.S. Customary Measures to Metric](#) resource for help converting between systems.

REQUESTING YOUR TRANSCRIPT

Once you have successfully completed a course, you may request an official transcript.

Depending on your institution, we provide transcripts through three separate options:

- Automated transcripts sent to most partner institutions
 - Official Sophia transcripts ordered through Parchment— required by some institutions (fee charged)
 - Official American Council on Education (ACE) transcripts, ordered through Credly
-

CONTACT US

If you have questions about any of the guidelines in this Student Guide or any other elements of your Sophia experience, you can reach the Learner Support Team by:

- Email: support@sophia.org
- Phone: Call 1-800-341-0327 between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. CT, Monday-Friday.
- Chat: Support available from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. CT. Monday-Friday.