

# GUIDE For ACA Online Students

## Introduction

Please print this Guide so that you can refer to it at the same time as taking notice of what is being displayed on the screen.

Appraisal Course Associates makes use of this course management system to support online courses and related resources and activities. The service is accessible from any browser and is handled with the same techniques used to manage other web pages. You can access Moodle from any computer with Internet access.

This guide is designed to give students all the information they need to get up and running on this new system.

Note that the actual appearance on screen is governed by settings on your own computer and as a result what you see may be slightly different from that shown in the examples. Plus, we design the views from time to time, so, again, what you see may differ slightly from the below.

## Entering the ACA Courses server

To access the ACA Courses server type the ACA Courses URL (<http://www.appraisalcourseassociates.com/lms>) into your Internet browser. You will be taken here:

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Appraisal Course Associates LMS. At the top, it says "Appraisal Course Associates" and "You are not logged in. (Login)". The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Courses for the personal property appraiser offered by Appraisal Course Associates:** A list of courses.
- Calendar:** A calendar for September 2008.
- Login:** A form with fields for Username and Password, and a Login button. Below the form are links for "Create new account" and "Lost password?".
- Available Courses:** A list of courses with details such as "Complete Online Course in Personal Property Appraising" by David I. Maloney, Ph.D., RPA-CM, and "USPAP Exam Prep Course (self-assessed)" by William M. Novotny, ISS, AP, OCA.
- Appraisal Course Associates:** A section with the ACA logo and a brief description of the organization.
- Course categories:** A list of categories including "Personal Property Appraising" and "USPAP Courses (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice)".

## If you are already registered:

In the Login box to the left, enter the username and password you provided when you opened your New ACA Courses Account and then click the Login button to gain access to the ACA Course(s) to which you are enrolled.

Once logged in, you will notice your user name in the upper right corner. Example:

You are logged in as **Dave Maloney** (Logout)

Clicking on the “Logout” link in the above will cause you to exit the course.

### ***Don't have a username and password yet?***

If you are not registered yet, you need to open a New Account by clicking on the “Create new account” link in the left hand Login box.

Complete the form that appears including your chosen username and password that appears and then “submit” the form.

An email will be sent to you containing a link. Click on the link to confirm your registration. When the registration confirmation page appears, click on the “Courses” button at the bottom to be taken to a list of all ACA courses being offered.

Select the course in which you would like to enroll.

You will then be taken to a Payment page where you can pay via PayPal.

If you have already paid ACA by some other means, you will have been sent an enrollment key by email. Enter that key at the bottom of the Payment page to access the course. (Once enrolled, you will not need to make use of an enrollment key again. You will only need your username and password to access your course.)

Once enrolled, the following screen appears. The **My Courses** box to the right lists the courses in which you are now enrolled. There is also an “All courses...” link that displays a list of all available courses, whether you are enrolled in the courses or not.

**Appraisal Course Associates** You are logged in as Dave Maloney (Logout)

Courses for the personal property appraiser offered by Appraisal Course Associates

**Calendar**  
September 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Appraisal Course Associates (ACA) is a partnership between Bill Novotny, ISA AM, GCA and Dave Maloney, ADA CM established to provide a comprehensive personal property valuation theory, principles, methodology, report writing and standards course. Our courses are designed for the personal property appraiser seeking a comprehensive review of or introduction to core valuation principles and methodology, including the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). (What is USPAP?)

Our online courses are either self-assessed or instructor-assessed. With self-assessed courses you answer quiz questions to check your progress and to ensure the instructor that you are comprehending the material. Instructor-assessed courses have the same content including quizzes, but you will also work directly with the instructor, and you may be required submit written work at the end of the course for review and approval.

**My courses**

**Complete Online Course in Personal Property Appraising**  
Teacher: David J. Maloney, Jr., ADA CM  
Cost: \$995.00

**Online 2008 USPAP Update Course (self-assessed)**  
Teacher: William M. Novotny, ISA AM, GCA  
Cost: \$225.00

This course focuses on changes included in the 2008-2009 (current) edition of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). It also addresses changes included in the 2005 and in the 2006(7) editions of USPAP as separate modules for those who last took the 13-hour National USPAP course earlier than 2006(7). In addition to reviewing changes, this course also reviews USPAP with a focus on those sections of USPAP that have not been changed but have been identified as problem areas. This course makes use of 2008-2009 USPAP + Guidance (required). An optional but recommend book is the 2008-2009 7-hour National USPAP Update Course Student Manual. (outline) (disclosure) (prerequisites)

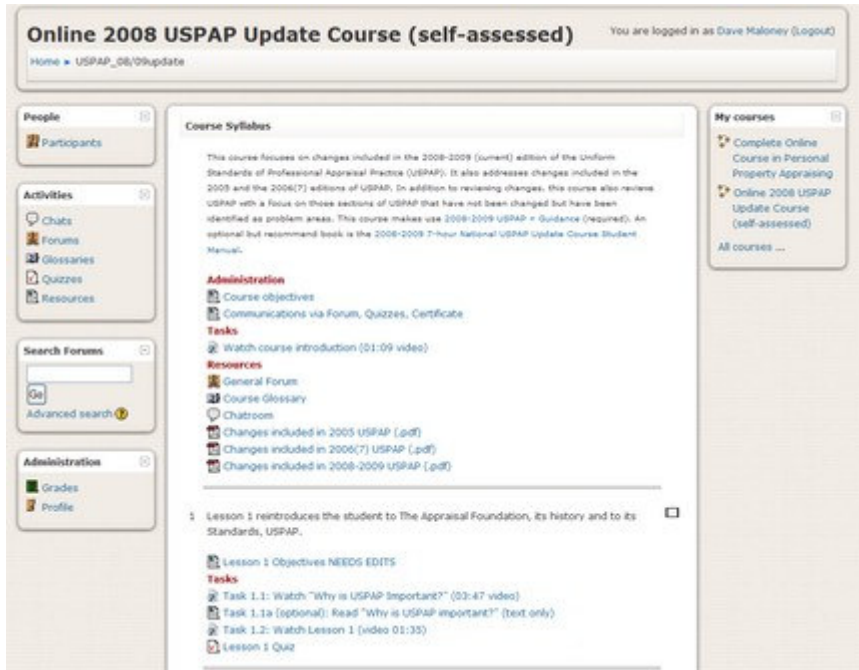
Search courses:

You are logged in as Dave Maloney (Logout)

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## Accessing your course

Under **My Courses** click on the name of the course you wish to open. A screen similar to the below will appear. The course title is shown on the top left hand part of the screen.



The screenshot displays a Moodle course interface. At the top, the course title is "Online 2008 USPAP Update Course (self-assessed)" and the user is logged in as "Dave Maloney". The breadcrumb trail is "Home > USPAP\_08/09update". The main content area is titled "Course Syllabus" and contains the following sections:

- Administration:** Course objectives, Communications via Forum, Quizzes, Certificate.
- Tasks:** Watch course introduction (01:09 video).
- Resources:** General Forum, Course Glossary, Chatroom, Changes included in 2005 USPAP (.pdf), Changes included in 2006(7) USPAP (.pdf), Changes included in 2008-2009 USPAP (.pdf).

The left sidebar includes sections for "People" (Participants), "Activities" (Chats, Forums, Glossaries, Quizzes, Resources), "Search Forums" (Go, Advanced search), and "Administration" (Grades, Profile). The right sidebar shows "My courses" with a list of courses, including "Complete Online Course in Personal Property Appraising" and "Online 2008 USPAP Update Course (self-assessed)".

## Using this course

All course elements are visible on the main page. Every Moodle course is initially set up with three columns (although this can change). The main central column, called the **Topic outline**, is the primary content area and contains links to the various elements that your instructor has posted as part of the course. These may include plain text or HTML documents, links for downloading videos, Word, Excel and PowerPoint files, images, and even links to web pages at other locations on the Internet. There may also be links to special features, such as online discussion groups (called forums), and a variety of other learning activities. It is beyond the scope of this document to explain how to access and use these various features -- your instructor will help you learn to use those special features that have been included in your course.

If you are attempting to view a MS Word, Excel or PowerPoint documents, you will need to have these packages on your computer. If you do not have Microsoft Office installed on your computer you can download free viewers from the Microsoft website:

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-gb/downloads/HA010449811033.aspx>.

If you are viewing a .pdf file, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader Software. If you do not have the Reader installed on your computer, you can download it for free from the Adobe website

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

## Basic navigation

In this section of this Guide we will take a quick tour of the course environment. Some of the items will be described in more detail later. Please bear in mind that you may not see all of the following in future courses, as they are not all essential for every course.

There are a number of ways to move around the course. The best way is through the internal navigation bar, also called the "Breadcrumbs trail" and positioned below the course title which shows your position in the course.

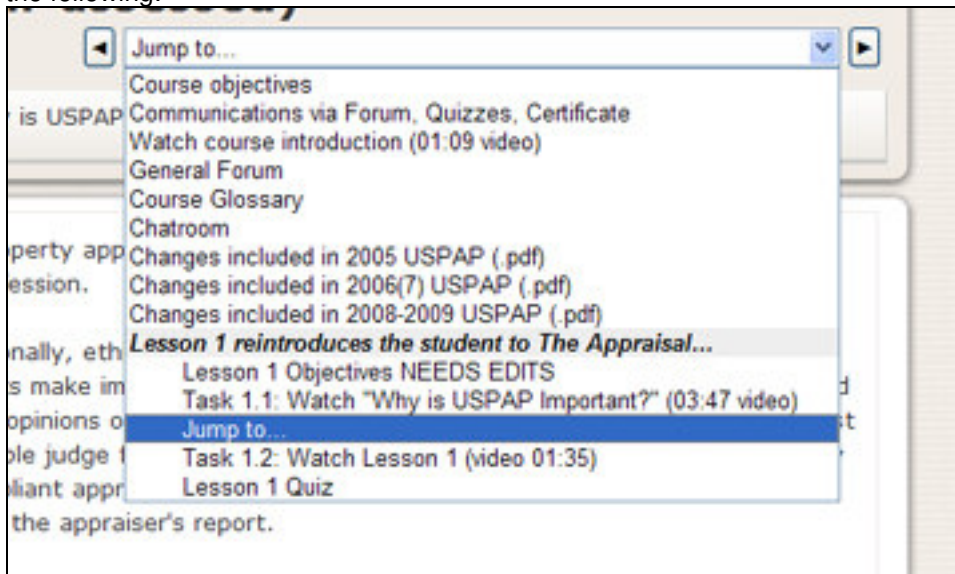
Home > USPAP\_08/09update > Glossaries

The notes below the following breadcrumbs example will make this clearer:

- **Home:** Clicking on this will take you to the home page screen which displays the courses in which you are enrolled.
- **USPAP\_08/09update:** This is the shortened name for this course. Clicking on it will take you to the course's home page.
- **Glossaries:** This is the page that you are currently in. It will vary depending on where you are in the course.

The above is only one example of how the breadcrumb Navigation bar may appear. Keep an eye on this as you navigate around the course, you will notice that it changes to reflect your current position.

While in a course activity you can move to another activity or resource in the course by means of the following:



a) Clicking on the **Jump to...** drop down list (above) will allow you to select from the complete list, in topic order, and navigate directly to your selection.

b) The **Previous/Next** arrows (below) will take you back and forth between the activities and resources in the order in which they appear in the course topics.



Note that if you use the above or click on the **Home** or on the short course name breadcrumbs trail links to navigate to another area of the course your input may not be saved. To avoid this, always ensure that you complete what you are doing within the activity first, e.g., posting to a forum and that you "saved" your changes before navigating to a new page.

Throughout the website and course you will encounter text which changes color and becomes underlined when you move your cursor over it. These are text links which, when clicked, will take you to whatever is described in the link text.

Finally, it is possible to navigate between pages by using the navigation buttons on your web browser, but this is **not** recommended. You will obtain more consistent results by using the navigation options within the website and course pages.

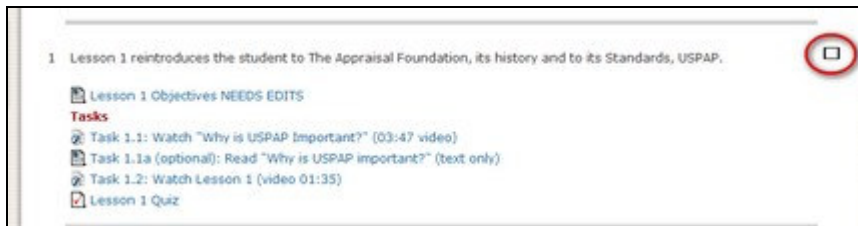
### **Course view**

The main course page is divided into a number of specific areas which you will encounter often (although, as mentioned above, not necessarily always). An overview of these is given in the following sections.

The course content area resides in the center of the course main page. It is in this area that your teacher will place the material which makes up the online elements of your course. The course homepage may vary in appearance depending on how your teacher has designed the course.

Our teaching software offers three course formats: Topics, Weekly and Social format. (However, we will make use primarily of the Topics format.)

For the Topics and Weekly formats, it is possible to focus on one topic or one week only and to access the other topics by selecting from a drop down list. This can make navigation more convenient where there are many topics in a course. To achieve this click on the squares at the right edge of the topic area you want displayed. See below:



This will “collapse” the topics leaving just one in view. The process can be reversed by clicking one of the two squares now displayed at the right of the topic area. When clicked, the “Jump to ...” menu allows you select other topics to view.

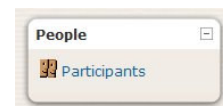


### **Blocks inside the course**

Blocks are on screen areas which are placed at the left side of the main course page. They fulfill a range of functions as described below. Note that by clicking the "minus sign" icon at the top of each block closes it to reduce screen clutter. You can open it at any time by clicking the "plus sign" icon.

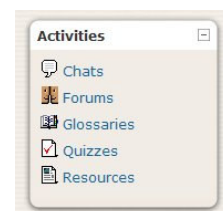
#### **People block**

The People block provides links to a list of all participants in the course by clicking “Participants” and your own user profile by clicking “Edit profile”. Sometimes you will see a reference to “Groups” in this block. This means that your teacher has established separate groups amongst the participants in the course. The manner in which you may view or interact with members of other groups (if at all) will vary depending on the needs of the course.



#### **Activities block**

This block displays all of the available activity types in the course. Clicking on the text to the right of the activity icon will display a list of all of the available activities of that type. This list includes any assignments, forums, quizzes, and other elements created by your instructor. There is also a useful link here called **Resources**, which points to an easy-to-use single-page index to all the objects in the course.



**A word about Forums:** The forum feature is basically an online discussion board. Its main purpose is to provide a structured way for students to exchange comments with each other and with the instructor in a public forum. But forums also serve an additional purpose. Whenever you post a comment on the forum, your message will be posted in the forum and at the same time will be sent as an email message to the instructor and your fellow students. This means that you will be able to keep up with recent forum posts without having to log into the system. There's no need to save these messages in your inbox since they will be saved for you in the forum area of the course. In addition, if you should happen to delete or otherwise misplace an email message from your course, you will be able to locate a copy of it in your course's forum area. **And always remember:** if Forums are being used inappropriately or you feel there is abuse of Forums by any user, please contact [info@appraisalcourseassociates.com](mailto:info@appraisalcourseassociates.com) immediately.

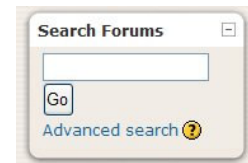
### Administration block

This is the place where you can view your grade book, change your password, and modify your personal profile. Take a look in particular at the **Edit profile** section in this block, which gives you an opportunity to modify some of the features of the course. This section also provides a tool for uploading a photo of yourself, which then appears next to your personal messages posted on the system.



### Search block

This block can be used to search for text among the forum entries in the course. To search simply enter the text sought in the field and click the "Search forums" button.



### My courses block

This block displays the courses in which you are enrolled and provides a link to a list of all courses on the site.



### Calendar block

As the name suggests this block provides a calendar function for the course.



### Logging out

To protect your privacy, be sure to log out of Moodle when you are finished. Closing the browser will usually log you out but to make sure click the **logout** icon located at the top-right of the course home page. This is especially important if you are using Moodle on a public machine such as at a library or an Internet cafe.