

Portal FAQ for Staff

Intro to portal: What is it?

The district portal is a web-based (“friendlier”) interface into a variety of district (and other) resources that can consolidate a variety of information into a single page. Think of it as a newspaper or magazine that has “stories” that you can read; but in this case some of the stories are dynamic and you can interact with them like any other computer application. Another key feature of a portal is that it is customized and personalized for each individual. So what you see may be different than what somebody else sees.

How is it customized and personalized?

The portal is **customized** so that certain groups within the district have different resources available to them. For example, a classified staff employee located on the Foothill campus will see something different than someone at Central Services or an instructor at De Anza. Each individual could have access to a different set of resources when they log in than others.

Individuals can also personalize the portal so that they can get specific information through the portal that others may or may not choose to get. In the Foothill-De Anza portal the user does this personalization on their “My Page” tab.

How does the portal know what information I want to access?

The portal provides information to you based on data it stores with your login account. It maintains a database that has information about the site you are assigned to, what employee group you belong to, and other information you provide it. When you log in it uses that information to provide you with the portlets associated with your information.

What is a portlet?

A portlet is a small container of information or functionality that provides information requested by the user through the portal. The portal is made up of many portlets, each acting independently of the others, and each displayed in a specific location of a web page in the portal. An individual page may have many portlets or very few, and they tend to be collected in specific pages based on functionality, purpose, or need. In the FHDA portal, for example, portlets that have a general functionality that many employees would be interested in are grouped into the My De Anza (or My Foothill or My Central Services) page and those that relate to specific job responsibilities may be grouped into specific tabs (like My Workplace, for example).

What are the tabs at the top of the page for?

Depending on what employee group you are in you will find three or four tabs at the top of the portal web page (faculty see four tabs, other employees only see three). See the illustration below for what staff see.



When clicked, each tab provides a different page of information and functionality. The “My De Anza” tab serves as the home page for the portal and is the first page the user will see after logging in. It provides a search tool and announcements from the college and ETS as well as a randomly chosen picture of the campus.

What are the other tabs (“My Workplace” and “My Page”) and what do they do?

The “My Workplace” tab provides access to functionality that all district employees may use. This includes access to district email, Meeting Maker (an online calendaring system), the college library catalog, and the district Reports web site (for retrieving monthly pay stubs and other information). The nice feature about the “My Workplace” tab is that once you have set it up with your account information (for email, the reports web site, or Meeting Maker) you never need to enter it again. Simply click on the web link and you are automatically taken to the application of your choice. This is known as “single sign-on” because in the future you only need to sign on to the portal and will not need to sign on again to each application inside the portal.

The “My Page” tab allows all employees to customize the web page to receive information that they may want to access. It provides access to a catalog of other portlets that can be personalized for individual needs and use.

Feel free to use training material developed for these tabs to learn more about the portal and how to use it effectively.