



enewsletter

A publication of 

Winter/Spring 2015

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AgLearn is Heating Up...

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With cold temperatures outside, it's a great time of year to stay inside with AgLearn.

In this issue, learn about the vast number of mobile courses that AgLearn has to offer. Find out how to get telework ready and get great little-known tips about the IDP process. Finally, make sure your finances are on point for 2015 with useful assets from DMason Financial.

WHERE IS MY IDP?

Wondering why your supervisor can't find and approve your IDP (Individual Development Plan)? It's possible that too much time has elapsed since you submitted it. To see if this applies to you:

- Log in to AgLearn.
- Select **IPD Goals**.
- Select **Recall Plan** to successfully recall the plan.
- Select **Submit for Approval** to resubmit the plan.

Your supervisor should now be able to see your IDP for approval!

Alert: There is a known issue with Internet Explorer (IE) version 11 in AgLearn

When you add a goal in an IDP or add a comment in a 360 assessment survey, typing a lowercase letter "p" does not produce the letter "p"; instead, it launches the user help window.

You can resolve this issue in one of two ways:

1. Use a different browser.
2. Add the usda.gov site to IE's Compatibility View Settings.
 - From the IE menu, select **Tools, Compatibility View Settings**.
 - In the "Add this website" text box, enter the phrase **usda.gov**.
 - Select **Add**.
 - Select **Close**.

You will now be able to type normally in all AgLearn windows.

Announcing More Tablet Friendly Courses

AgLearn has more than 2000 courses that are mobile and easy for you to access on your tablet. In the coming weeks, you will receive emails that highlight many of these courses to make it easier for you to jump right in!

For the optimal experience, Wi-Fi is recommended. For more technical details, go to:

+ **Mobile Requirements**

Also, check regularly for updated courses on the AgLearn splash page, on the left side of the page, under "Resources", then "Mobile Courses".

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Useful Tips for AgLearn Administrators

Required By Dates

AgLearn can automatically assign dates by which items or curricula are required to be complete. However, *initial periods must be set up in the item or curriculum record.*

What's an initial period?

An initial period is what AgLearn uses to determine the "Required By" date when learning is assigned. For example:

Suppose you want all users to have the same amount of time to complete an item after it is assigned. We will use 90 days in this example.

1. Open the item record. In the **Summary** area, complete these three fields:
 - Initial Number (For this example, enter "90")
 - Initial Period (Days)
 - Initial Basis (Event, in this case, the assignment date)

The process is the same for a curriculum, except that the initial period must be specified for each item *within the curriculum*. To make these changes:

- Open the curriculum record.
- Select **Content** on the **Related** area.
- Select **Edit** and select **Edit** again *for each item*.

If you want all users to have the same Required By date—regardless of the date of assignment—**open an Ask Team AgLearn Now ticket**. For example, you might need to do this for annual training that must be completed by September 30. This task is complicated so please allow Team AgLearn to take care of it for you.

Assignment Dates

Whenever an assignment is created, the date of the assignment is the default Assignment Date. *There's a catch:* if you create an assignment on April 1 for many users and choose to schedule to have the assignments take place overnight — or at some later date — AgLearn will use the initial period to calculate the Required By date, based on the Assignment Date you created the assignment, not the date the assignment is actually made. Take this into consideration when scheduling assignments to be run at a later date. (*Note: you cannot enter an Assignment Date that is in the future.*)

What do you do if you need to change Required By dates after the assignment has been made?

The Required Dates Editor can do this for you quickly and easily. Instructions on using the Required Dates Editor can be found in the Administrator Toolkit, beginning on Page 128. (*Note: The Required Dates Editor does not work well if used on a curriculum that contains requirements. Be particularly careful with the assignment dates and initial period when using these kinds of curricula.*)



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Updates to DMason Financial Courses for 2015

This is a good time of year to see if you have maximized your savings for this year and look ahead to how you can make the best choices for next year. DMason financial provides federally mandated training in financial literacy and retirement planning. The arsenal of DMason Financial courses has been updated to include changes for 2015. Here are some to get you started:

Plan Your Savings Strategy with the New TSP (120 — For all federal employees and members of the military)

Early-Career TSP, Retirement, and Financial Planning

106 — For employees in the Federal Employees Retirement System (hired after January 1, 1987, or those who switched from CSRS to FERS)

107 — For employees in the FERS Special Retirement System (includes firefighters, law enforcement officers, air traffic controllers, military reserve technicians, members of Congress, and Congressional employees)

Mid-Career TSP, Retirement, and Financial Planning

109 — For employees in the Federal Employees Retirement System

110 — For employees in the FERS Special Retirement System

Late-Career TSP, Retirement, and Financial Planning

101 — For employees in the Civil Service Retirement System

102 — For employees in the CSRS Special Retirement System

103 — For employees in the Federal Employees Retirement System

104 — For employees in the FERS Special Retirement System

Whether it's training in financial literacy, retirement planning, or tax-advantaged retirement plans, Debbie Mason, a **CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™*** professional, has the information you need. Take advantage of retirement plans and become a smart money manager and investor.

Go to AgLearn and get on the path to retirement security and sound money management.

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and  in the U.S., which it awards to individuals who successfully complete CFP Board's initial and ongoing certification requirements



Are You Prepared to Telework?

AgLearn is the place to get the knowledge you need for successful teleworking. Whether you are a supervisor or employee or need to know the right tools and technologies, you can get what you need from AgLearn. Here are some suggested courses:

Telework: Best Practices for Employees

This course is developed from the employees' perspective. It highlights your responsibilities as a teleworker. Learn how to use the right communication and technology, stay connected to the team, and how to build a business case for telework.

Telework: Best Practices for Supervisors

Subject matter experts Anthony Marci of GSA, Rebecca Ayers from OPM, and Kate North of e-Work Learning, share their perspectives and best practices on telework from a Supervisor/Manager's role. Learn how to lead a distributed workforce and how to determine the best candidates for telework. Get the best practices on how to manage and monitor performance, how to deal with under-performers, and how to manage by outcomes instead of by sight.

The Tools and Technologies of Telework

USDA subject matter experts Jerome Davin and Rory Schultz are joined by Cindy Auten of Mobile Work Exchange to describe tools available for telework. Participants will learn how to successfully telework using the tools available for collaboration, conferencing, social media, and agency rules for using personal equipment.