

SafeAssign™ for Plagiarism Prevention

San Diego State University

SafeAssign™ is a plagiarism prevention service that is integrated with the Blackboard 8 Learning System. Unlike Turnitin.com, instructors and students won't need to create user accounts and passwords. They use SafeAssign™ after entering a Blackboard course. This service helps deter plagiarism by detecting unoriginal content in papers submitted to SafeAssign™. Submitted papers are checked against:

- **Internet**
- **ProQuest ABI/Inform** database with millions of current articles, updated weekly
- **Institutional document archives** containing papers submitted to SafeAssign™ by users in the respective institution (i.e., SDSU users)
- **Global Reference Database (GRD)** containing papers **volunteered** by students from Blackboard client institutions.

Instructors create **SafeAssignments** in Blackboard where students upload their papers into the **institutional database**. At the same time, students may voluntarily donate copies of their papers to the Blackboard **Global Reference Database (GRD)** that is shared by other institutions. Students may also submit drafts to validate their paper without submitting to the institutional database. As an instructional tool, a SafeAssign™ **draft** will allow students to self-check their papers for proper citation and attribution. They can make changes and then submit their revised paper to a final paper SafeAssignment created by the instructor. **Direct Submit** allows instructors to submit individual papers or several papers in a .ZIP file outside of a SafeAssign™. Note that the ZIP file should not contain no more than 100 papers for submission.

I. Two Ways to Create a SafeAssignment

Step 1

- In the **Control Panel**, select a **Content Area** such as **Assignments**.
- Click **Edit View** in the upper right-hand corner.
- Select **SafeAssignment** in the pull-down menu and click the **Go** button to create a SafeAssignment

Or

- Select a content area such as **Assignments** in left-side bar of your Blackboard course homepage.
- Click **Edit View** in the upper right-hand corner.
- Select **SafeAssignment** in the pull-down menu and click the **Go** button to create a SafeAssignment.

Please see Figure 1 below. Already two SafeAssignments have been created – SA Draft 1 and SafeAssignment paper 1. After a SafeAssignment is created, following Steps 2 and 3 below, then **the SDSU Release Statement** will appear above any text instructions that you include.

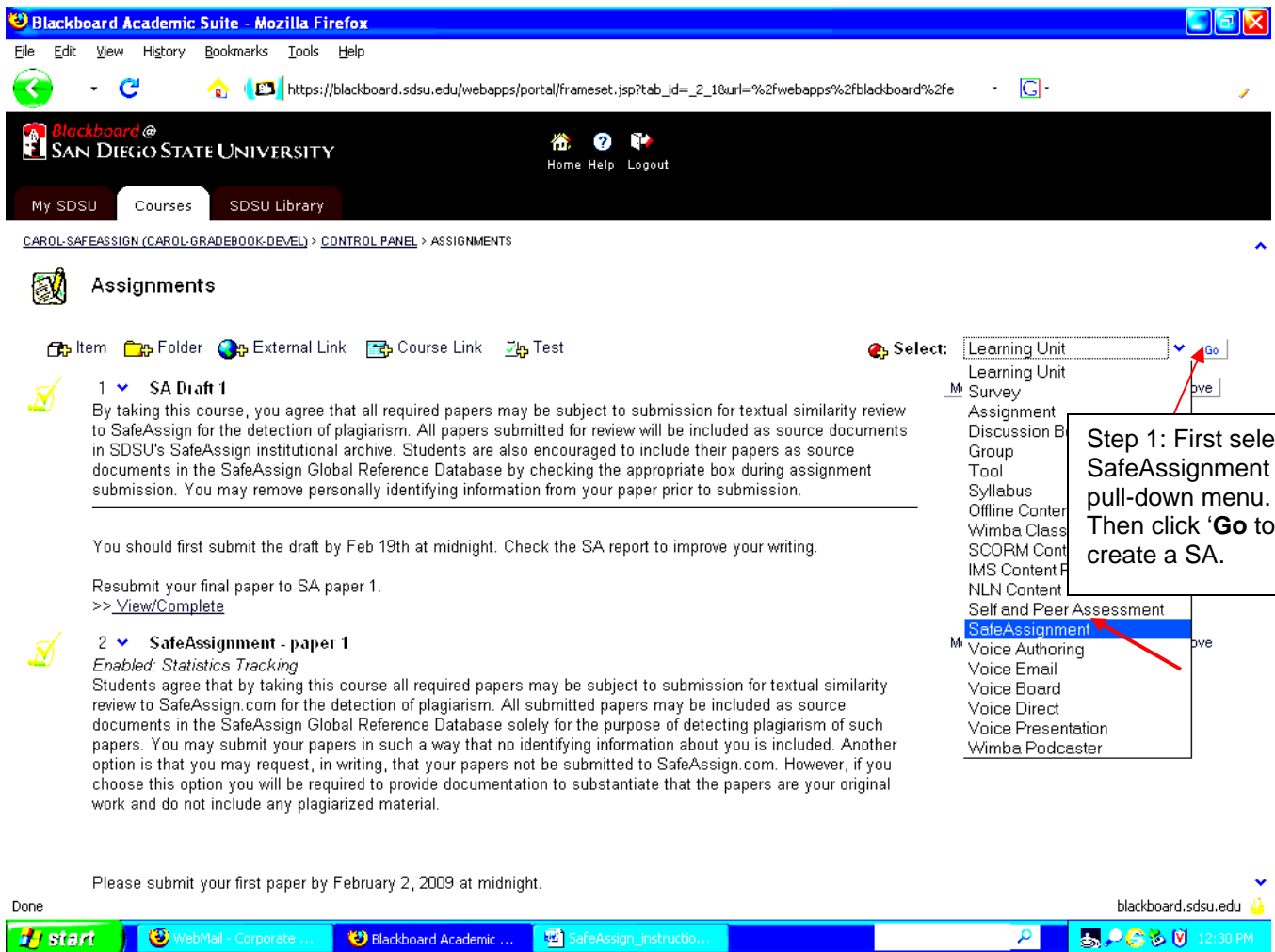


Figure 1 - Creating a SafeAssignment in the pull-down menu of a content area

Step 2 – The next screen **Add SafeAssignment** has three sections - **Enter Information**, **Optional Announcement**, and **Submit**. Under the first section, **Enter Information**, you can set up your SafeAssignment using the following criteria:

Title	Enter a title for the SafeAssignment. It helps to use SA ... in the title to distinguish the SafeAssignment from any other Assignment.
Points Possible	Enter the points possible for the SafeAssignment. This value will be shared with the GradeCenter Item created for the SafeAssignment.
Text	Enter any instructions you wish to give your students for completing the SafeAssignment. The instructions will appear under the SDSU release statement (see above example).
Available	Select whether or not the SafeAssignment should be visible to students.
Availability Date	Use these controls to set the date range when students can submit papers to the designated SafeAssignment. It is possible to set only a Start date or only an End date.
Drafts	Allows students to validate their papers without submitting it to the institutional database. Useful as a learning tool to help students learn how to attribute papers properly.

Students Viewable	Determine whether or not students can see the report generated when their papers are submitted.
Urgent Checking	Sets papers to a high priority in the queue.

The **Optional Announcement** allows you to automatically create an announcement that a SafeAssignment is awaiting students when they enter your course. The Optional Announcement field is limited to 1,000 characters. You can include useful information such as where the SafeAssignment is located, due dates, general assignment information, etc.

Step 3 - Click the **Submit** button in the bottom right of the screen to finalize your set up.

II. Viewing a Student's Submission and SafeAssign™ Report

Step 1 – Enter your **Control Panel** and then click on the **SafeAssign** area under **Course Tools**. See Figure 2 below.

★ Note: if **SafeAssign** does not appear in the Control Panel, then add it by clicking on **Manage Tools** under Course Options section. Then, click on **Building Block Tool Availability**. Check the **SafeAssign** 'available' box and **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Academic Suite interface in Mozilla Firefox. The browser address bar shows the URL: https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_id=_2_1&url=%2fwebapps%2fblackboard%2fe. The page title is "CAROL-SAFEASSIGN (CAROL-GRADEBOOK-LEVEL) > CONTROL PANEL". The main content area is titled "CAROL-GRADEBOOK-LEVEL: CAROL-SafeAssign - Carol Tohsaku (Instructor)".

The interface is divided into several sections:

- Content Areas:** Syllabus, Course Documents, Course Information, Assignments.
- Course Tools:** Announcements, Course Calendar, Staff Information, Tasks, Send Email, Discussion Board, Digital Dropbox, Glossary Manager, Messages, Voice Announcement, Course Objectives, Self and Peer Assessment, **SafeAssign** (highlighted with a red arrow and a yellow star).
- Course Options:** Manage Course Menu, Course Design, Manage Tools (highlighted with a yellow star), Settings, Recycle Course, Course Copy, Import Course Cartridge, Import Package, Export Course, Archive Course.
- User Management:** List / Modify Users, Enroll User, Create User, Remove Users from Course, Batch Create Users, Manage Groups.
- Assessment:** Test Manager, Survey Manager, Pool Manager, Course Statistics, Grade Center (highlighted with a callout box), Performance Dashboard, Early Warning System.
- Help:** Support, Manual, Contact System Administrator, Quick Tutorials.

A callout box with an arrow pointing to the "Grade Center" link contains the text: "Click Grade Center (see III) for grading a SA paper." The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the "start" button, open applications for "Blackboard Academic ..." and "SafeAssign_instructio...", a search bar, and the system tray with the time "11:53 AM".

Figure 2 - SafeAssign, Grade Center, and Modify Tools in the Blackboard Control Panel

Step 2 - Locate the specific SafeAssignment in the list and click **View**. Note that the **institutional release statement** automatically appears along with any instructions (i.e., “Please submit your first paper by”) created in the **Text** instructions section. The release statement is loaded upfront by the institution’s network administrator.

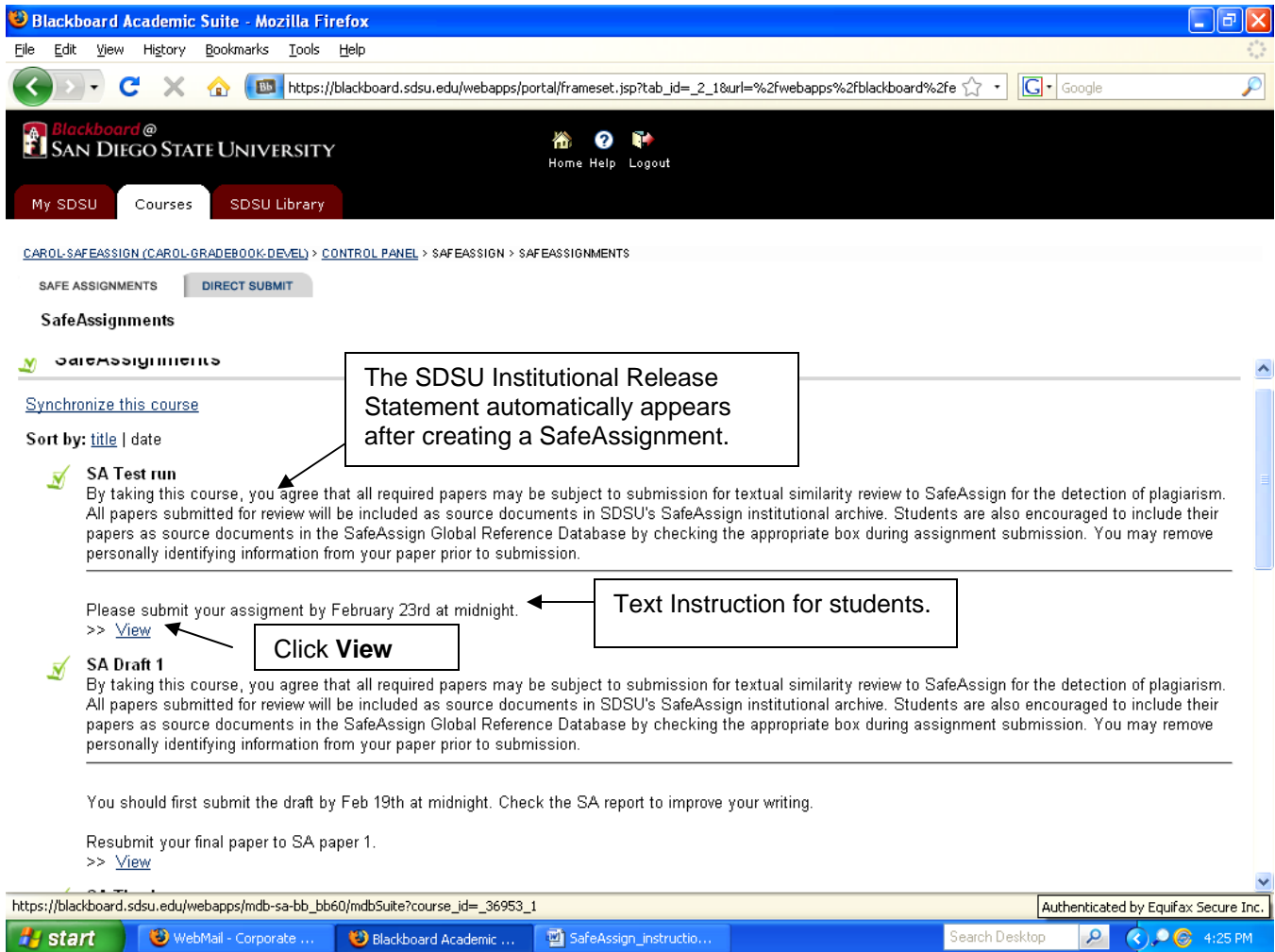


Figure 3 - SafeAssignment with the Institutional Release Statement and Instructions

Step 3 – A list of **Student submissions** will appear. Student, Carol submitted her paper on February 2 at 15:45 PST. The following columns appear for each SafeAssignment:

Text	Select this option to view the student’s paper and any comments from the student.
File	Select this option to download the Student Submission.
Matching	The percentage listed is the percentage of the paper that matches other sources. Please read the full report to determine if the matching is properly attributed.
SA Report	Select this option to view the full SafeAssignment report by clicking the green SA check mark.
Clear Attempt	Select this option to remove the submission from the database. For example, if the student uploaded the wrong file.

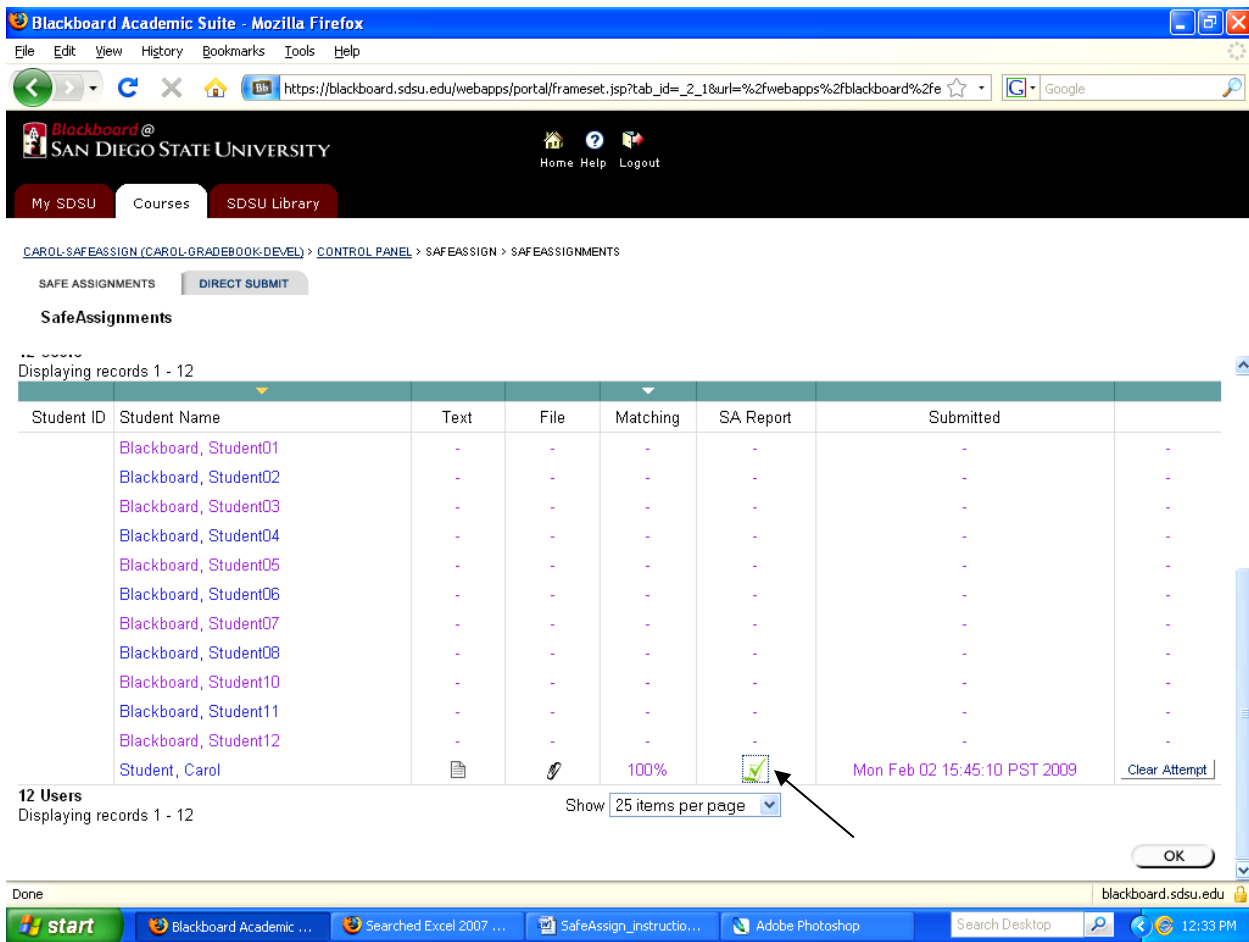


Figure 4 - Viewing a SafeAssignment in Blackboard’s Grade Center

Step 4 – Click on the **green SafeAssign™ check mark** in the **SA Report** column to see the SA Report. For detailed information on how to read and interpret these reports, go to: <http://wiki.safeassign.com/display/SAFE/Interpret+Reports>

Within the SA Report, you can access how to read and interpret these reports by clicking on **HELP** in the right upper portion of the screen. This will also take you to the SafeAssign™ wiki interpretation of SA Reports.

The SA Reports are divided into three sections:

- **Report Information:** This section lists data about the paper, such as the author, percent matching, and date of submission. There are options for downloading the report, emailing the report, or viewing a printable version. Note that the printable version may be the most effective view of the report for those users that rely on assistive technologies to access the Blackboard Learning System.
- **Suspected Sources:** This section lists the sources of the matching text. Users may select sources, exclude them from the review, and reprocess the paper.
- **Manuscript Text:** This section shows the submitted paper with matching blocks of text identified. Clicking a matching block of text will display information about the original source indicating the probability that the highlighted text was copied from the source.

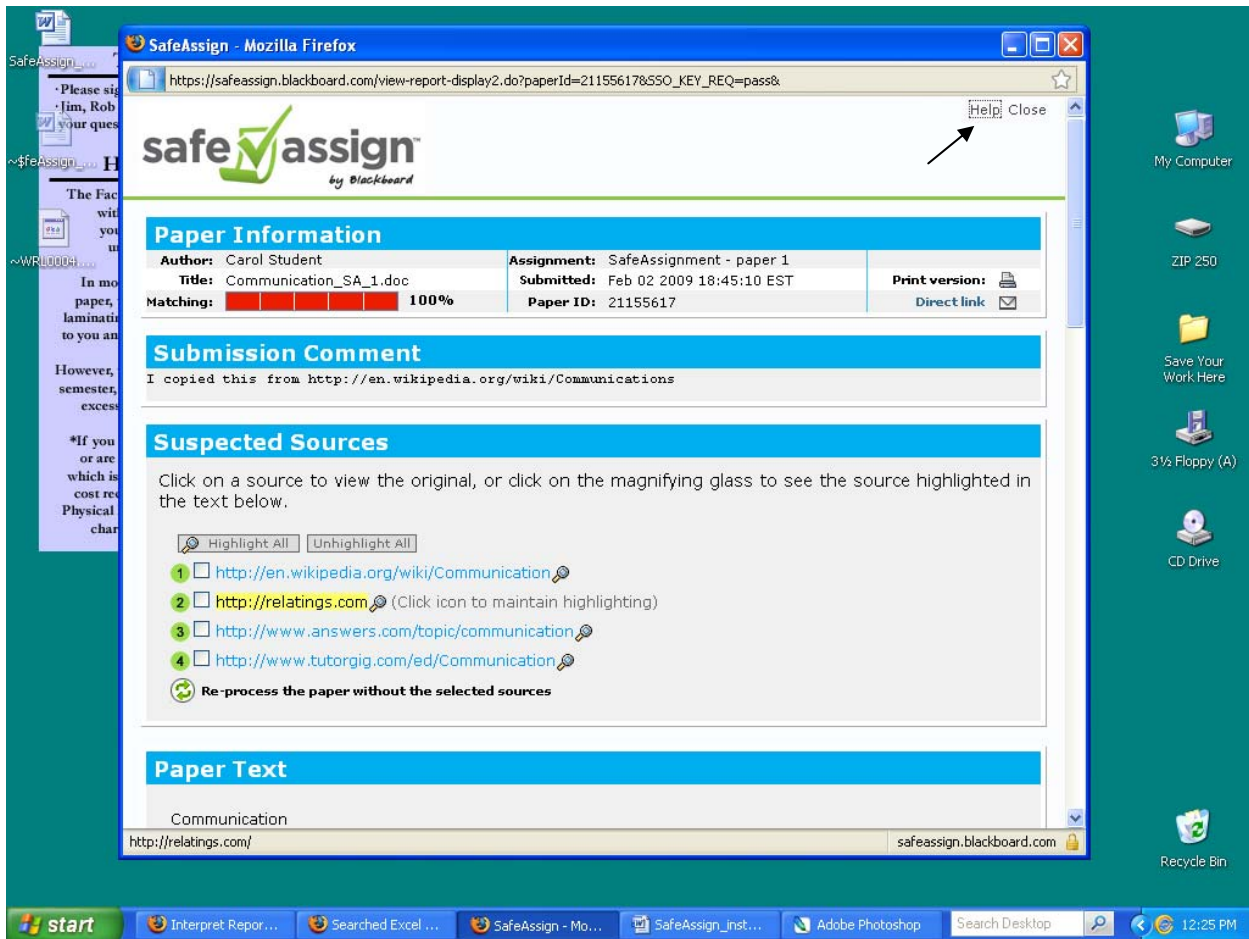


Figure 5 - Interpreting a SafeAssignment Report with matching text

III. Grading a Student's SafeAssignment Submission

SafeAssignments are integrated into **Grade Center** so that you can access and grade directly from the Grade Center like other Assignments. Since SafeAssignments are not automatically graded, you will grade them like other assignments by clicking on the "!" and typing in the grade points.

Step 1 – Enter your **Control Panel** and open the **Grade Center** under the **Assessment** section.

Step 2 – Under the appropriate SafeAssignment column, access an individual student's assignment information area by clicking on the ! across from the student name. You may have to scroll to the right or left to find the SA column.

Step 3 – For each student, you can click in the graded SA cell and see three options: Grade Details, Add Comment (to send feedback), and Exempt Grade.

IV. Direct Submit

Direct Submit generates SafeAssign™ reports on papers submitted outside of a SafeAssignment. **Direct Submit** allows instructors to submit individual papers or several papers in a .ZIP file. Note that the .ZIP file should not contain more than 100 papers for submission. In addition, papers with over 5,000 phrases or are more than 10 MB in size cannot be submitted. Because this feature is *not integrated with Grade Center*, instructors should use SafeAssignments to collect submissions whenever possible. Direct Submit supports MS Word .doc, .rtf, HTML (htm or html), .txt, and .ZIP to upload multiple files.

To submit papers through Direct Submit:

1. From the **Control Panel**, click **SafeAssign** under **Course Tools**.
2. Click the **Direct Submit** tab.
3. A list of folders and papers will appear. This list includes papers already uploaded through Direct Submit. Note: If you delete these files, then these papers will be deleted from the institutional database of existing materials.
4. Navigate to a folder where the paper or papers will be uploaded.
5. Click **Submit a Paper**.
6. Select **Upload File** and browse for the file. Individual papers and .ZIP file are accepted. You may also select **Copy/Paste document** and add the document text in the field.
7. Select the upload options:
 - **Submit as draft** – A SA Report will be generated, however, the paper will not be added to the institutional database for future comparisons.
 - **Skip Plagiarism Checking**: You can skip plagiarism checking and simply add the paper to the database for future comparisons.
8. Click **Submit**.

Direct Submit Shared Folders are viewable by anyone with access to the direct Submit tool through the course. Multiple instructors and teaching assistants can view submissions related to a course in **Shared Folders**. **Private** folders can be used to manage papers for an individual instructor. These folders follow the instructor and are available in any course where the user has instructor-level privileges. See Figure 6 below for the Direct Submit tab.

V. Synchronize a Course

After an instructor performs a course copy or moves an individual SafeAssignment to another course, the instructor will need to activate the Safe Assignment in the new course.

From the **Control Panel**, go to **SafeAssign** in **Course Tools**. Click on **Synchronize this course** to establish the link between the SafeAssignment and the central SafeAssign™ server.

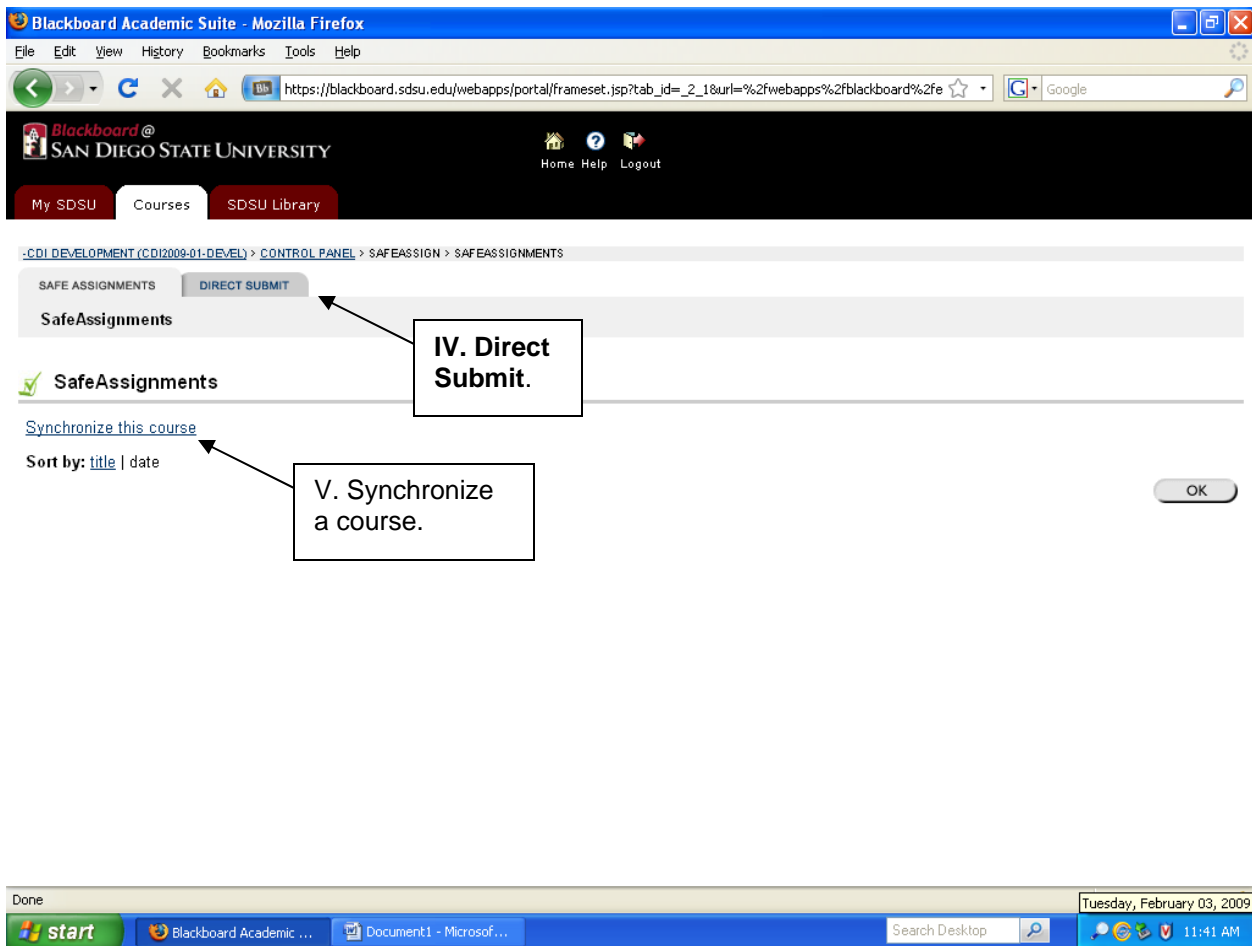


Figure 6 - Direct Submit and Synchronize a Course features

SafeAssign™ Manual for SDSU Students is at the SafeAssign™ wiki:
<http://www.safeassign.com/>

- Please refer your students to the Love Library **Student Computing Center** (<http://scc.sdsu.edu/home.php>) for questions about using SafeAssign™. They can call (619) 594-3189 or email scc@rohan.sdsu.edu:

SafeAssign™ Support for SDSU Faculty

For assistance with SafeAssign™, please contact:

- **Blackboard Help Desk for faculty:** bbhelp@sdsu.edu and (619) 594-3485
- **ITS faculty consultants** in the ITS FIT (Faculty Instructional Technology) Center at Adams Humanities 1109 - (619) 594-5727 (Monday through Friday)
- **ITS Plagiarism Website:** <http://its.sdsu.edu/tech/plagiarism/>
- **SafeAssign™ Website:** <http://www.safeassign.com/>
- **SafeAssign™ Wiki** with faculty/student resources, including downloadable manuals: <http://wiki.safeassign.com/display/SAFE/Home>

For assistance with cases of plagiarism, please contact **Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities** (<http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/index.html>)

SDSU Institutional Release Statement

Please include the following statement in your course syllabus when describing the use of SafeAssign™ for plagiarism detection:

“By taking this course, you agree that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign™ for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for review will be included as source documents in SDSU's SafeAssign™ institutional archive. Students are also encouraged to include their papers as source documents in the SafeAssign™ Global Reference Database by checking the appropriate box during assignment submission. You may remove personally identifying information from your paper prior to submission.”

This release statement automatically appears under each newly created SafeAssignment.

Please encourage your students to remove identifying information (i.e., name, SDSU IT, email address, phone number, etc.) and to submit their papers to the Global Reference Database.

The contents of this document include information from the SafeAssign™ faculty manual at the SafeAssign™ wiki. Thanks to Tim Parsons in Media and Instructional Technology Services at Sul Ross State University in Texas and Cyd Burrows in Instructional Design and Support at the University of San Diego for their advice and expertise.

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