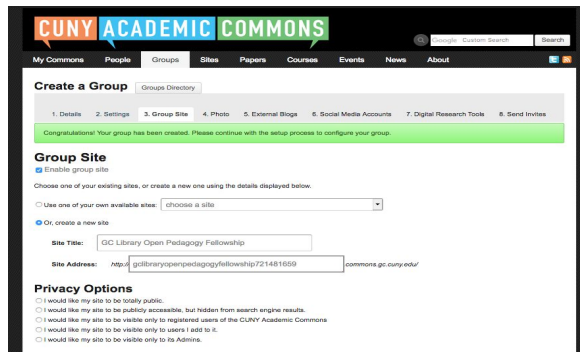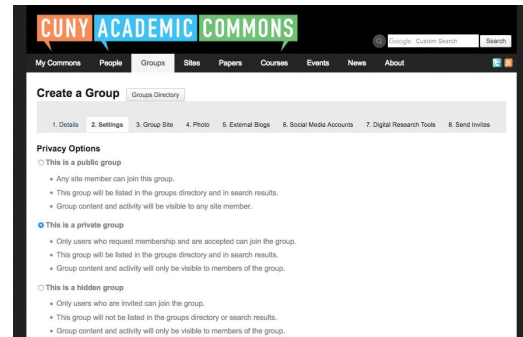# Privacy Settings
CUNY Academic Commons Quick Guide

This document explains where you can modify privacy and openness settings on the Commons. Group and site privacy controls are located in separate interfaces. Groups can be public, private, or hidden. On sites, users may password protect pages, make posts private, and publish content under an alias.
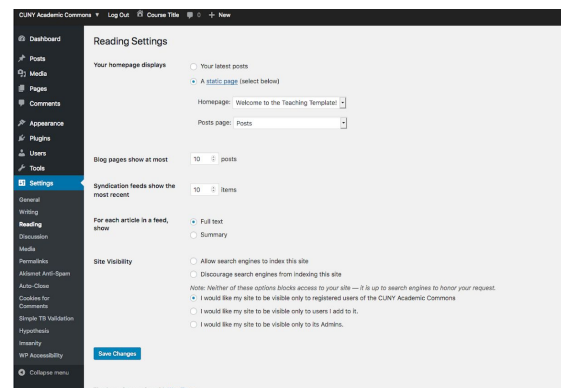
Groups

1. Group Creation: Group visibility is established when a group is launched, and can always be changed by visiting _Manage >Settings_ in your Group interface. "Hidden" groups are difficult for students to find, so we recommend you set your group to be either public or private.
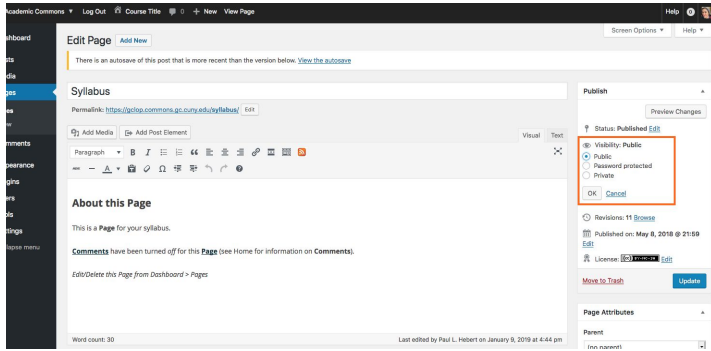
2. Coupled Group-Site Creation: After choosing the privacy setting for your group, you can select the privacy setting for the linked site. The top two options create a site that is open to the public internet. The third and fourth options are open to either all or some Commons users. And the last option is open only to you and other site Administrators. This can always be changed later by visiting _Settings >Reading_ (#3 below) in the Dashboard of your site.
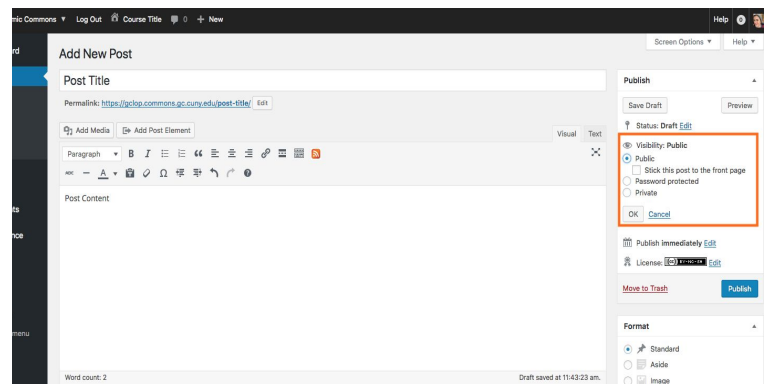
Sites

3. Settings > Reading > Site Visibility: Site visibility can be modified in the Site Visibility area of the Settings>Reading menu, which you can find on your site's dashboard. Note: If you plan to make your site completely open to the public, it's wise to have a conversation about the risks and benefits of doing so with your students.

4. Password-Protected Pages: When creating or editing a page, you can choose to password-protect it (see orange box in the screenshot), or make it private. If password-protected, set the password and share it with individuals who will need access.

5. Private Posts: By default, posts are public to anyone who can view the site. However, post creators have the option to make a particular post "private" by editing the post's "Visibility" setting (see orange box in the screenshot). Private posts and pages are only visible to the site administrator (usually the professor) and the post creator (the student). If a professor would like ALL posts to be private, they can install the plugin "Default Private Posts".

6. Using an Alias: Students (and faculty members) can use aliases to cloak their identities. When first registering on the Commons, a student needs to provide a username (one word, all lowercase, no special characters). By default, that name will be used to attribute content created by that student. However, on each member profile which defaults to the username. After registration, most members of the Commons fill this in with their actual name. If a student is concerned about privacy, they can create a "nickname" in the Users >Your Profile section of the site dashboard. The student would then need to inform the professor of his or her true identity.