



## CAREER *services* CENTER

PHONE 513-745-3141

FAX 513-745-3523

WEB [www.xavier.edu/career](http://www.xavier.edu/career)

E-MAIL [csc@xavier.edu](mailto:csc@xavier.edu)

**XAVIER**  
UNIVERSITY

# PORTFOLIOS

A portfolio is an organized collection of a person's progress, achievements, and efforts that demonstrates his/her accomplishments. The collection is a marketing tool aimed at potential employers that includes work samples and personal feedback on them.

Traditionally, students majoring in art, education, and writing use portfolios. Students with other majors are realizing that, in today's competitive job market, a creative and informative portfolio could be the key to setting you apart from other candidates.

Portfolios can:

- Market your achievements
- Document the scope and quality of your experience and training
- Demonstrate your skills and abilities
- Show growth through personal reflection

## CREATING A PORTFOLIO

Creating a portfolio that markets your skills and abilities and reveals your personal philosophy is challenging. Start by thinking about yourself. You have the freedom to create a portfolio that reflects you and your abilities. Here are four steps to help you create your portfolio:

### 1. Self Assessment

You need to clarify your objective. What are your professional goals and how have you demonstrated them? Look at your skills, abilities, experiences, and personal philosophy to determine what you have to offer an employer. Research what types of skills potential employers in your field of interest are looking for, and determine what pieces of your work can prove that you have what it takes to get the job done. How have you demonstrated the skills that a position in your field needs?

### 2. Decide What to Include

Once you know what skills and abilities you need to show prospective employers, you are ready to find samples that will illustrate your capabilities. Look through your work carefully. Find pieces of work, evidence of involvement, or letters of recommendation to include in your portfolio as examples of your past successes. Make sure the items you choose fit in the portfolio case. You don't want to make it difficult for an employer to view items or possibly damage those that are oversized or awkward to handle. Consider too the ramifications of losing or damaging originals or one-of-a-kind items. Depending on the piece, you might want to include a slide or photo, a copy, or even a summary description of a project or item.

### Some suggestions for materials to include in your portfolio:

- Resume
- Official Transcript
- Test results (NTE, FE, GRE, etc.)
- List of references
- State certification or licensure documents
- Writing samples
- Slides of pieces you designed and made
- Your artist's statement
- Internship or co-op summary report
- List of professional organization involvement
- Honors and award information
- Evidence of senior project
- A videotape of you teaching your best lesson
- Sample lesson plans
- Teaching units or tests you prepared
- Pictures of bulletin boards you designed
- Statement of your teaching philosophy
- Feedback or evidence from students and peers
- Reflection on feedback
- Personal goals or objectives for the next several years
- Summary of teaching methods, strategies and teaching environments
- Habits of self-assessing and improvement

### 3. Design and Arrange

Choose an organizational method that best illustrates your accomplishments. One idea might be to prioritize your portfolio according to the skills and experiences that you have found are most directly related to your career field. Another idea is to organize your portfolio in chronological order so that employers can see how your skills and knowledge increased over time. The key to your organizational format is easy access. Use a table of contents and headers to organize the materials in your portfolio. At times you might be asked to leave your portfolio with an interviewer—so it is also important that your portfolio be self-explanatory and simple enough for a stranger to figure out.

#### Sample headings for your portfolio include:

- Academic and Personal Information
- Skills and Technical Abilities
- Professional Information
- Formal and Informal Education or Training
- General Work Performance
- Work Samples Illustrating Specific or Specialized Skills

### 4. Review Your Portfolio

Know your portfolio inside and out. When you go to an interview, you want to be able to use your portfolio to illustrate your skills and abilities. Be able to find items you are looking for quickly. Remember that a portfolio cannot work magic by itself. Do not rely on your portfolio to sell your skills to an interviewer. A good portfolio can help, but ultimately you have to prove your skills and abilities in person.