



PORTFOLIOS

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of information and visual representations that demonstrate evidence of learning outcomes, skills, experiences, or competencies. Typically involved in the production of a portfolio are the synthesis of ideas, reflection on achievements, self-awareness and forward planning.¹ 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. However, 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.

There are two types of portfolios: Hard copy portfolios and Electronic portfolios (ePortfolio). While much of the information overlaps, the majority of information presented here is directed toward ePortfolios. Tips specific to hardcopy portfolios may be found toward the end of this document.

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

WHY USE AN E-PORTFOLIO

- It's serves as an electronic supplement to a resume
- It's flexible
- Shared Easily
- Links to your ePortfolio may be included on resumes, referenced in emails, and included on your LinkedIn profile

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

Clarify your objective, identifying professional goals and shoring 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 seek, 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. Students can create e-portfolio items from video/audio streaming of their presentations, examples of their writing, or demonstrated competencies/skills in specific professional areas that employers seek.

Some examples of materials/information to include in your portfolio:

- Profile with Contact Information
- Resume
- Background/Professional Philosophy/Statement of your teaching philosophy
- Education – Coursework, senior project, class projects, videos, case studies
- Computer/Technical Skills
- 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
- Sample lesson plans
- Professional Development / Conferences / Workshops
- List of professional organizations/affiliations involvement
- Honors, Awards, and Certificates
- Videotape of you teaching your best lesson
- Teaching units or tests you prepared
- Feedback and recommendations from students, peers, faculty/employers
- Personal goals or objectives for the next several years
- Summary of teaching methods, strategies and teaching environments
- Habits of self-assessing and improvement
- List of personal/professional skills

3. Design and Arrange

There is no one way to create your career e-portfolio. What you choose to include and how you choose to express your skills and qualifications is up to you. E-portfolios can include a wide range of content, but it should all be tailored to and focused on the job you are applying for. Choose an organizational method that best illustrates your accomplishments.

4. Review Your Portfolio

Know your portfolio inside and out and keep up to date. 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.

FREE E-PORTFOLIO RESOURCES

- Vidualcv.com
- OPRResume

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- An ePortfolio is not social media. It is not a way for you to connect with friends and strangers.
- An ePortfolio does NOT replace a resume.
- Not all employers look at ePortfolios. Do not solely rely on them.
- Keep them up-to-date! It's embarrassing to have potential employers look at outdated information.

HARDCOPY PORTFOLIO

- Make sure the items you choose fit in the portfolio case. You do not want to make it difficult for an employer to view items or possibly damage those that are oversized or awkward to handle.
- Organization and aesthetic delivery are crucial!
- 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.
- 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.

¹ EPortfolios definition <http://www.eportfolios.ac.uk/definition>