

Professional Portfolios

(804) 289-8547 | careerservices.richmond.edu
Office Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Walk-in Hours: M-F, 2 to 4 p.m.



WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO?

A vehicle for collecting and presenting the evidence of your growth and achievement over time
An exercise that helps you identify and reflect on your passions and strengths
A dynamic marketing tool to communicate your unique assets to future employers

WHY SHOULD I USE A PORTFOLIO?

To provide tangible evidence of the skills mentioned on your résumé and in your interview
To make connections between seemingly “unrelated” activities or areas of study
To help you identify and define your skills and passions
To stand out in the crowd of applicants!

WHEN WILL I USE MY PORTFOLIO?

In an interview with a potential employer; use your words first, and then back them up with visual evidence
Be strategic in your questions and create an opportunity to share from your portfolio

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.career.fsu.edu/experience/document/portfolio-guide.html
www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4148 (for teachers)
www.elmhurst.edu/~perport/ (focuses on reflection)
www.internweb.com/portfolios.asp (for business, particularly internships)

HOW CAN I CREATE A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO?

Start with your core items. This will give you a very basic portfolio to work from. Then, collect additional items as needed.

Core Items

- Title Page
- Personal Statement (mission/goals/philosophy)
- Resume or CV
- Transcript
- Table of Contents
- Cover Letter
- References Page
- Course Projects

Additional Items

References	Education	Professional Development
Recommendation letters from faculty or supervisors	Excerpts from research or other papers	Handouts from training sessions or workshops attended
Work evaluations	Pictures, etc. from travel abroad	Conference agendas
Thank you letters	Handouts from class presentation	Certifications or licenses
E-mailed accolades from a faculty member or supervisor	Outlines or PowerPoint slides from class group projects	Professional organization brochure or membership certificate

Student Organizations	Honors	Work & Volunteer Experience
Pictures (keep it professional)	Letter of scholarship award	Summary of relevant experience
Brochure or web site home page print out	Letter of invitation to join honor society	Brochure or other printed materials from company
Organization membership certificate	Honor Society membership certificate	Flyer for event or fundraiser
Agenda for meeting you led or committee you served on	Academic or Student Affairs Awards	Work samples, reports, proposals (get supervisor's permission)
Flyers for event or fundraiser you planned		Brochure from volunteer organization
Newspaper article about event you were involved in planning		Chart/graph to demonstrate sales or service improvement/increase

PUTTING YOUR PORTFOLIO TOGETHER

After you have collected items, it is time to organize and assemble your portfolio. Start by organizing your items into categories, and then selecting headings for your categories. Your portfolio should be representative, not comprehensive, so don't include every single item you consider.

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Alumni & Career Services

SELECT CATEGORY HEADINGS

Your category headings should describe what is included in each section. Feel free to create your own headings. Each section should include at least several items so combine smaller, related sections if necessary (for example, references and evaluations or education and honors).

Here are some ideas for category headings...

Introduction	Course Projects	Organizations
References & Evaluations	Relevant Experience	Leadership
Education	Work Experience	Honors & Awards
Professional Development	Volunteer Experience	Accomplishments
Programs & Events	Community Service	Community Involvement

RECREATE ITEMS IF NECESSARY

If you had trouble finding some items you had planned to include, you can recreate items that once existed. For example, if you can't find the original flyer for a fundraiser that you helped plan for your sorority or fraternity, you could recreate that flyer. Most of your items should be originals so recreate items only as a last resort, and do so sparingly. Never recreate an official item or an item that was created by another person, such as a certificate, award, evaluation, or letter. Only recreate items such as flyers, cover letters written by you, or meeting agendas.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND OWNERSHIP

Only include items you own or have permission to include. You do not own work that you have done for an employer so request your supervisor's permission to include that work. Honor confidentiality of clients, customers, and patients. You can remove or obscure names and other personal information, or use initials instead. Convert figures to percentages to protect sensitive data.

DEVELOP CAPTIONS

Captions are used to explain items and help your portfolio stand alone. You do not need to include a caption for every item. For example, you probably would not include a caption for your resume, but would include a caption for an excerpt from a paper you wrote for a class. The caption should include a brief description of the item and the context in which it was created.

MATERIALS

Black, ringed binders (for master copy and employers' copies)
Clear, non-reflective sheet protectors

Card stock for mounting (only for master copy; use photocopies for employers' copies)
Divider tabs for quick reference

ASSEMBLE

The goal is a professional, clean, polished appearance. Put each item into a sheet protector. Use card stock for mounting smaller items. You could also slip one sheet of card stock into each sheet protector, which will give the pages a heavier, more professional feel. Create a cover page that includes your name, and perhaps your contact information. Create a table of contents. Create a cover page for each category that includes the name for the respective category. You can put your divider tabs on these pages. For example, "Introduction," "Experience," "Honors" or "Projects." Omit page numbers so that you can easily reorganize, add pages, or delete pages.

GO DIGITAL

A digital version of your portfolio can also be a helpful tool in your job or internship process. You can send a link with ease to networking contacts, whereas the sharing of a hard-copy portfolio is most appropriate for in-person interviewing. Use the same guidelines above when making content decisions for a digital portfolio. Be careful when including contact information or other personal identification data in your digital version, however, as online portfolios are sometimes searchable. Check with your portfolio hosting site for privacy options.

- Sample resources
 - <http://carbonmade.com/examples>
 - <https://crevado.com/>
 - <https://www.postwire.com/>