

PORTFOLIO_GUIDELINES

What Is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a binder or book that shows off your work and abilities. It goes beyond a cover letter and a résumé. A portfolio is a job-hunting tool that you develop that gives employers a picture of who you are — your experience, your education, your accomplishments, and your skills. Not only does it show the employer who you are, but it also displays what you have the potential to become. It is designed to do one thing—**to support you as you market yourself!**

Top Six Reasons to Have a Portfolio

1. Distinguish yourself from the competition.
2. Turn the interview into an offer.
3. Increase the admission chances by impressing the interviewer.
4. It is tangible proof of your abilities.
5. It might help you get promoted.
6. It can help you find the position that is right for you!

Where to Begin

You should start developing your portfolio by first doing a self-assessment. Evaluate what you have to offer and what the best ways are to market your talent. You should decide which skills and experiences you have will relate to the needs of the interviewer, or what you would most like the interviewer to see. If you have don't have much work experience—most students don't—you'll need to mine your school work, volunteer work, and hobbies for evidence of the relevant skills you know you have. For example, if you did event promotions for a campus organization, include a copy of a flyer or poster you designed.

The following is a list of items you may want to include:

- ❖ **Table of Contents** (for easy reference)
- ❖ **Career Summary and Goals:** A description of what you stand for (such as work ethic, organizational interests, management philosophy, etc.) and where you see yourself in two to five years.
- ❖ **Traditional Résumé:** A summary of your education, achievements, and work experience, using a chronological or functional format.
- ❖ **Scannable Résumé:** A text-only version of your résumé should also be included.
- ❖ **Skills, Abilities and Marketable Qualities:** A detailed examination of your skills and experience. This section should include the name of the skill area; the performance or behavior, knowledge, or personal traits that contribute to your success in that skill area; your background and specific experiences that demonstrate your application of the skill.

- ❖ **Samples of Your Work:** A sampling of your best work, including reports, papers, studies, brochures, projects, presentations, etc. Besides print samples, you can also include CD-ROMs, videos, and other multimedia formats.
- ❖ **Testimonials and Letters of Recommendations:** A collection of any kudos you have received—from principals, professors, etc.
- ❖ **Awards and Honors:** A collection of any certificates of awards, honors, and scholarships.
- ❖ **Conference and Workshops:** A list of conferences, seminars, and workshops you've participated in and/or attended.
- ❖ **Transcripts, Degrees, Licenses, and Certifications:** A description of relevant courses, degrees, licenses, and certifications.
- ❖ **Test Results:** Document professional or graduate school testing results (such as GRE subject test results).
- ❖ **Newspaper Clippings:** Include articles and/or photos that address your achievement.
- ❖ **References:** A list of three to five people (including full names, titles, addresses, and phone/email) who are willing to speak about your strengths, abilities, and experience. At least one reference should be a former manager.

Organizing Your Portfolio

- ✓ You should keep your portfolio in a professional three-ring binder.
- ✓ Come up with an organizational system of categories to put your items together. Sample categories are as follows: Work Experience, Education, Awards and Certificates, Special Skills, Personal Accomplishments, Background. Use tabs or dividers to separate the various categories.
- ✓ Your portfolio should be no more than 25 pages. The shorter it is, the better because an employer will only really absorb 6-10 outstanding samples.
- ✓ Every page should have a title, a concise caption, and artifact. Captions should explain the process you went through and the resulting benefits.
- ✓ Photocopy full-page samples to a smaller size, if needed.
- ✓ Make the layout and design consistent, and don't get overly decorative—keep it clean and use lots of white space.
- ✓ You may also consider including a disk or CD with samples of your work. An on-line portfolio is another option, where the web link to your work could be provided.
- ✓ Once you have put together your portfolio, you should create a title page, table of contents, and introduction. The introduction is your opportunity to tie together your portfolio contents and summarize your qualifications.

Finishing Touches

- Have a faculty member or someone at the Career Center review and critique your portfolio.
- Develop a condensed version of your portfolio, containing your most important accomplishments to leave with your interviewer. It could be in an inexpensive report cover or folder. This provides something physical to remind the interviewer that you were there. It also provides you an occasion for an additional contact in a week or so to arrange for its pickup. Make sure you do not include original materials in which you only have one copy!
- Mention that you have a portfolio in the reference section of your resume as well as in your cover letter.

