

Portfolios

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<http://careercentre.sheridaninstitute.ca>

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Portfolios

What is a portfolio?

- concrete proof of your credentials and experiences
- a complete showcase of formal and informal learning as well as paid and non-paid work.
- a collection of papers or career/life artefacts which may include audio and video examples
- a document cultivated throughout a lifelong career that is essential for job search and promotion at all levels
- a creative document that is unique and distinctly you
- a confidence builder

There are types of portfolios:

- **Learning Portfolio:** a documentation of your academic experiences, audience: faculty/educational institutions
- **Career Portfolio:** a summary of all your education and work experiences, content is organized in such a manner as to be meaningful to the creator, audience: the creator
- **Job Search Portfolio:** a tailored Career Portfolio, content is organized to highlight the creator's employability skills/experiences related to a specific job or type of work, audience: the employer/networking content

You will need a portfolio *throughout your career* to:

- keep track of your accomplishments and skill sets
- allow you to identify gaps in your experience and/or skill sets
- gain employment, compete for promotions or contracts and to negotiate a raise
- renew your confidence and self-esteem during corporate change or career transitions
- apply for grants and small business loans

What format can a portfolio take?

- Print: (suggestion, use a 3-ring binder which will allow you to easily move items around in the portfolio)
- Electronic: Internet (web page-note: password protect it!, blog), Digital (PowerPoint, Prezi, specialized software programs designed to create portfolios)



The Portfolio Includes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Originality and Confidentiality • Mission Statement • Career Goals • Résumé • References • Skill Sets • Certificates • Diplomas • Degrees • Transcripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards • Academic Plan of Study • Work Samples • Works in Progress • Assessments • Letters of Reference • Letters of Appreciation • Recommendation Letters • Professional Memberships & Certifications • Community Service Work
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Recommend having only 8 to 10 sections in your portfolio—any more than 10 and the reader may lose interest

You could also include:

- Performance Reviews
- Past Job Descriptions
- Proof of Second Language
- Participation in Competitions
- Photographs and/or Videos (note: secure permission to use these items in your portfolio, however if it is a photograph from a published newspaper, you do not require permission to use it in your portfolio)

Remember to *always* include your Statement of Originality and Confidentiality.

It demonstrates to the reader/potential employer that you have secured permission to include examples of work that are the intellectual property of the employer.

Copy the following Statement of Originality and Confidentiality :

This portfolio is the work of _____. Please do not copy without permission.

Some of the exhibits, work samples and/or service samples are the proprietary property of the organization whose name appears on the document. Each organization has granted permission for this document/product to be used as a demonstration of my work.

April 6, 2012

How to Create Your Portfolio

1. **Collect:** Get examples of your best work
2. **Reflect:** What type of portfolio are you creating? Learning? Career? Job Search?
3. **Select:** Which examples should you include in your portfolio?
4. **Create:** Select your format (print or electronic)
5. **Update:** It is recommended you update your portfolio every 4-6 months

Think About Your P.E.A.K.S.

P=Personal Characteristics

E=Experience

A=Accomplishments

K=Knowledge

S=Skills

Include a Mission Statement

- It will raise the perceived level of your professionalism
- It is unique to you and is transferable
- It capitalizes on the demand for increased focus on employee fit
- It sets the employers' expectations of the candidate

Examples:

"To listen, learn and foster excitement and enthusiasm within my team and workplace. To give constant focus to the recruitment, retention and professional development of the individuals who make a company thrive and prosper."

"To strive for excellence in all that I do by leveraging every talent, gift and skill that I possess for the betterment and progress of my employer and my team."

"To give of myself everyday to leave things better than I found them and do what I can to make the world a kinder and safer place."

Include your Short-Term and Long-Term Career Goals

Remember:

When stating your career goals, consider who your audience is:

Learning Portfolio: Faculty/Educational Institution and yourself

Career Portfolio: You are the reader! So be completely honest!

Job Search Portfolio: The employer is the reader—phrase your goals in such a way that it resonates with your potential employer while remaining truthful.

Evaluate Your Selected Exhibits / Examples of Your Best Work:

- When did I do this?
- What was my involvement?
- Why am I proud of it?
- What employability skills do I think this exhibit shows?
- Is this good evidence of my skills?
- Do the exhibits / examples of my best work show a continuous growth in skills?
- Are these skills a particular employer is looking for?
- What samples are most interesting to you? Why?

Reminder!!

- ⇒ If you are including a work sample that was created when working for an employer (paid as well as unpaid work), be sure to **secure their permission** to use it in your portfolio.
- ⇒ Suggestion: get their permission to use the work sample *in writing* and include which format you intend to present the work sample (print format and/or electronic format)

Assembly Tips

- Use a cover page
- Include a table of contents, maximum length should be 10 sections
- Keep the audience in mind when organizing the content; organize your work by skill sets
- Use exhibit cards
- Make high quality copies of documents, do not use originals
- Put all items in good quality plastic protectors
- Use coloured paper to draw attention to special work or samples
- Proofread everything 2-3 times
- Remember, as with an art portfolio, it is originality that stands out!

Exhibit Page / Card

- Always include an exhibit page, or card, with each example of work provided.
- An exhibit page provides information about the artefact
- An example of the information an exhibit page can hold includes:

Name (of the Exhibit)

Date (it was created)

Description (of the Exhibit)

Skills Demonstrated (create a check-list of the skills you demonstrated in creating this document)

An exhibit page is your opportunity to demonstrate to the reader that you understand not only the content of the work you produced, but you are aware of the skills/abilities you developed in the process of creating the exhibit—this is referred to as **structured reflection**.

What will make my portfolio exceptional?

An average or mediocre portfolio is a compilation of documents with little thought given to its organization and/or overall look.

A professional portfolio is organized, well thought out and contains exhibit cards which explains to the reader what the person has learned through the process of creating the exhibit. A professional portfolio is created with the needs of the reader in mind.

How to Present Your Portfolio in the Job Interview

- Always take your portfolio with you on an interview. Not all candidates will have a print version of their portfolio with them and it will be an impressive addition to your resume and interview.
- As part of interview prep, review the job description and your portfolio, organize your portfolio exhibits to highlight your skills, abilities and education as it relates to the job requirements
- You must be prepared to speak to samples in your portfolio and answer any questions the interviewer have; when describing an exhibit, use the “situation/action/result” method.
- If the employer asks you a question about a skills or an experience you happen to have a concrete example of in your portfolio, the suggested strategy is:
 - ⇒ **Before** you begin to answer the question, inform the employer that you happen to have a document in your portfolio that demonstrates that skill/experience.
and
 - ⇒ **Ask** the employer if they would like to see it while you are answering the question—do NOT reach for your portfolio before they answer your question!
- If the opportunity to show your portfolio did not occur during the interview, at the end of the interview when you are given the opportunity to ask questions, the suggested strategy is:
 - ⇒ Ask two relevant questions as it relates to the job
 - ⇒ Make your third question “Would you like to see my portfolio?”

Final reminders!

- Always bring a *copy* of your portfolio to the interview – never the original version
- Never leave your portfolio behind with the employer

E-Portfolios

The content of an e-portfolio is exactly the same as the structure and content of a print portfolio.

A portfolio is a document that clearly communicates to the reader what your strengths, skills and abilities are as they relate to your career/job goals and objectives. This is achieved by drawing the connection between your education, training, and work experience to your personal work philosophy, values and goals.

Tips for Creating Your E-Portfolio

Content:

It's recommended that a print version of your portfolio is created at the outset so that it can be used as a guide in developing your e-portfolio. The print version will serve as your "master copy."

Remember: For a job search portfolio you must select content that supports your objective, and indicates you possess the skills, experience and education necessary to be successful in the type of work you are seeking.

Format Options:

E-portfolios can take the form of:

- Internet-based which could be in the form of a website, a webpage on a host site, or a blog
- Software specifically designed for portfolio creation (Optimal Resume)
- CD Rom
- PowerPoint presentation

It is recommended you choose a format you are comfortable working with so it can be easily accessed and modified when necessary. Be careful you don't create a situation in which you have to rely on someone else to make changes and amendments to your e-Portfolio.

Special Considerations!

Privacy Issues

It is strongly recommend you choose a format that allows you to control who will see your portfolio, perhaps a format that will allow you the option of password protection. Portfolios contain personal and confidential information. When a portfolio is in print format you have complete control over who can view it. Be sure you can exercise the same control over your electronic version.

Copyright Issues

If an employer has given you permission to use a company document to showcase your abilities do not assume that permission extends to an electronic format. Contact the employer/agency and ask permission to use the document for your e-portfolio. ***It is highly recommended you request that they put their consent in writing.***

Final Tip!

Look at other e-portfolios to help you decide on the look and the format of your portfolio. Review e-portfolios from your industry as well as from other industries to ensure you have a broad understanding of the possibilities.

Example Letter of Consent

I (manager/supervisor) give permission to (your name) to use the (name of document/exhibit) in his/her portfolio as a sample of his/her work completed from the period of (state dates) at (name organization).

PRINT

ELECTRONIC

WEB/INTERNET

Signature: _____
(manager/supervisor's name)

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(your name)

Date: _____

You do NOT have to include the Letter of Consent in your portfolio—file it with the original copy of your exhibit.

Career Centre Resources:

Meet with an **Employment Consultant** to discuss how to create a portfolio—please check the Career Centre website for drop-in times

You can access **Optimal Resume** to assist you with developing your:

- ⇒e-Portfolio
- ⇒Job Interview Skills
- ⇒Thank You Letter
- ⇒Resume and Cover Letter

To access Optimal Resume, please go to:

<https://sheridaninstitute.optimalresume.ca/login.php>

and click on [create new account]

If you would like one-on-one assistance with getting started with using Optimal Resume, please speak with the Career Centre staff!