

The ePortfolio

Companion Document

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This document is a companion piece to [the featured report on ePortfolios](#) published on Profweb by the afore-mentioned authors on June 2, 2015. It is strongly recommended that you read the featured report first.

The purpose of this document is to guide your reflection while preparing for the implementation of your ePortfolio project. The content is not exhaustive, and it is therefore recommended that you speak to an Education Advisor (IT-Representative) to guide you through the process of developing and implementing your project.

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Context and goals

Context for the use of portfolios

The portfolio will be used:

- in one course
- in several courses of the same program

If the portfolio is used by more than one teacher, the goals must be jointly chosen, and everyone must adhere to them.

Some institutional requirements for a successful integration of an ePortfolio project:

- The program administrators and the Education advisor associated with the program are familiar with the portfolio and approve of its use
- Several teachers in the program are (directly or indirectly) involved in the project
- Support personnel are available to give technological assistance as needed (ex. computer technician)
- The students have access, both in and outside the classroom, to the requisite technological tools

Ensuring that institutional conditions requirements are met within your environment will contribute to the success of your project.

Depending on how comfortable participants are with technology in general, and more specifically with the tool chosen, it may be necessary to plan training sessions for the tool that will support the use of the portfolio, and indicate how to receive assistance.

Types of portfolio

There are four major types of portfolios that all involve reflection but have different goals. It is possible to combine two portfolio types into a hybrid portfolio. What types of portfolio are most suitable for your project?



- The presentation portfolio: A collection of the student’s **best assignments** to showcase his or her competencies.
- The learning portfolio: A collection of the student’s **assignments and reflections over a certain period** showing his or her progress.
- The evaluation portfolio: A collection of assignments enabling the teacher to evaluate a student’s competencies and to assign a grade. Students thus integrate the assignments that demonstrate their **mastery of the required competencies** into their portfolio.
- The professional development portfolio: A collection of assignments and reflections documenting a person’s **career path**.

Goals of the portfolio

It is recommended to set specific goals adapted to the context of the course or program - goals that are clearly formulated, observable, measurable, and realistically achievable in the given time.

First, specify goals centred on the student’s learning. These goals should represent an added value for the students in order to motivate them to invest the necessary time and effort into building their portfolio:

Formulating a goal:

Guide the student to _____

action verb + object + context

Example:

Guide students to build a toolbox of professional resources throughout their program that they can use in their courses, internships, and eventually, in the labour market.

Student-centred goals:

You can add goals centred on teaching and supervision as well, for example.

Offer “just in time” feedback to students throughout their internship to enable them to make adjustments to their practice as they go along.



Goals centred on teaching and supervision:

Scenario

Plan the scenario

Throughout this step, keep in mind the goals that were established and make consistent choices that will facilitate their attainment.

Portfolio content

What will the expected assignments or other work, reflections, and comments in the portfolio be? How many will there be? When will the student have to submit them?

If students must produce assignments using various media (text, video, etc.), it is important to ensure that they master the tools and software needed to complete these assignments and to provide them with the necessary training and support, as needed. Students must also be assured access to material resources to produce the expected elements (peripherals, software, cameras).

A portfolio is not a presentation prepared in a few days at the end of a course.

Schedule

During the scenario planning stage, it is recommended that you have a schedule that includes the activities to be carried out by each participant. Below you will find a table that provides an example of how you might guide planning the schedule for use of the portfolio in a course. Note that it is very important to present the goals of the portfolio by specifying the added value (from the student's point of view) by using it at the beginning of the semester. Remember that a portfolio should be used frequently because it is built gradually and is not a presentation prepared in a few days at the end of a course.

Course or week	Student tasks and assignments to be sent to the portfolio	Teacher tasks (and other participants)	Resources to plan or prepare for the week
Before the start of the first course		Place the procedure to guide the first steps in the tool, as well as add questionnaires for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verify installation of the tool with the computer technician. Ensure he or she will be on hand for the first class, as required. ▪ Get access codes for all the students (login and password). ▪ Contact the participants who will be invited to class and give them the necessary information about the portfolio and their role.
First course	<p>Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access the portfolio tool. ▪ Create/edit your profile. <p>Assignments to put in the portfolio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaire on acquired competencies and objectives (date of delivery) 	Present the project, the objectives of using the portfolio, and its added value (from the student's standpoint) for the course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ During or after the course: verify the reason for failed login attempts with the support technician (if any).
Second course
...



Organization of content

How should the portfolio be organized? What type of organization will be suggested to students?

- By course
- By competency
- By discipline
- By theme
- By steps in a process or approach
- By dossier (presentation, learning, evaluation)
- Other: _____
- Student's choice

Questions for reflection

Regardless of which goals are pursued or which type of portfolio is chosen, the work presented in the portfolio must be accompanied by reflections or comments (which also involve reflection). To facilitate reflection and make it more meaningful, it is recommended to guide reflection by asking questions based on the goals that were for the portfolio. The questions should encourage students to support their reflection with concrete elements (their assignments, their experience, their life experience), rather than abstract elements (for example, competency statements). The questions can focus on different aspects of learning.

Here are a few examples of questions to guide the reflection of your students:

- What steps did you follow when carrying out these assignments? What went well? What are the difficulties you encountered? What will you do next time?
- Referring to the evaluation grid, what grade would you give yourself for this assignment? What are its strengths and which points could you improve?
- How does this assignment (or set of assignments) prove that you have acquired the targeted competency?
- If you compare your assignments at the start of the semester with those at the end of the semester, what changes do you notice? What have you learned and applied that explains your progress?
- At the end of this course, how has your impressions of the profession changed in comparison to what you had described in your first assignment?
- What knowledge acquired in your previous courses did you find useful while completing this assignment? How was it useful?

What reflections (connected to the goals of the portfolio) would you ask the students to consider? What concrete elements will they refer to in order to complete the task? What questions would you ask to guide this reflection?

Evaluation tools

The portfolio can be used for summative (certifying), formative, and diagnostic assessment.

- A sufficient variety and quantity of evidence of competencies, knowledge, know-how, and life skills to be assessed will be added to the portfolio
- A complementary interview (or other evaluation methods) has been planned to evaluate the desired criteria (as needed)
- Qualitative evaluation grids, ideally with rubrics, have been designed and will be provided to students at the start of the project to
 - help students to evaluate themselves
 - ensure that students clearly understand what they will be evaluated on
 - help teachers make an assessment and give feedback or a grade

Teacher and student permissions

- The use of the portfolio is supervised while leaving students a certain amount of control that enables them to take ownership of their portfolio, to personalize it, and to be motivated to use it. (This control can involve content and its presentation, organization, personalization, and user access management.)

Roles of the various participants

Teacher's role

- Plan the use of the portfolio (content, schedule, roles and tasks of the various participants, etc.).
- If necessary, provide the resources to show students how to use the portfolio tool and to provide them with technical support.



- Plan time at the beginning of the semester to present the portfolio to students (ideally using concrete examples of content), clearly explaining its goals and added value, and describe the process that will be involved.
- If the portfolio is used as an assessment tool, clearly present the evaluation criteria (ideally using qualitative evaluation grids) at the beginning of the semester.
- Present the tasks (related to the portfolio) that students will have to perform throughout the course.
- Guide students in doing their assignments and in their reflections by way of instructions, files, leading questions, etc.
- Provide support to students to help them select assignments, organize their portfolio, and evaluate themselves.
- Provide feedback to students to encourage them, while promoting and facilitating the learning.

Student's role

- Take ownership of the portfolio and personalize it.
- Take an active role, do assignments and put them in the portfolio along with reflections and comments on a regular basis.
- Take the feedback received into account.
- Post comments in your peers' portfolios, as needed.
- Comply with the established rules of conduct (respect).
- Manage the access rights to their portfolio so as to build and maintain their digital identity/reputation.

Other participants

Which other participants might be involved in the project (as needed)?

- Other teachers
- Pedagogical participants (Academic Advisor, Guidance Counsellor, or other)
- Experts
- Potential employers
- Other: _____

Have these participants been properly prepared to take part in your project?

- We met with the participants and explained their roles to them
- They are able to access the tool (login and password, tutorial, or training, as required ...)
- They have agreed to invest the required time and effort



Confidentiality, protection of privacy, and ethics

Whether by means of a training session, documentation, or a classroom discussion, issues related to confidentiality, protection of privacy, and ethics must be addressed with the students. Students must be sensitized to

- Their visible role as an author publicly posting content to the web and potential repercussions of having a presence on the Internet
- The importance of communicating in an ethical manner
- The importance of respecting intellectual property and copyright laws (whether for ideas, images, or any other source)

Tools

Essential vs. desirable features and functionalities

Basic features and functionalities

Depending on the context and the established goals, various portfolio tools can be used. It is important to ensure that the tool chosen has the requisite features and functionalities. As no tool is perfect with the ability to meet every need, it is important to identify the functionalities that are essential to the success of the project.

- **User-friendliness**

- The tool resembles tools that are already used by teachers and students
- Learning the tool takes little time

The tool would be more user-friendly if it were compatible with the institution's learning management system (LMS) or with tools the students already use in their studies

- **Organization of content**

- Content can be filed and organized
- It can be re-filed or deleted, as needed
- Links can be created between elements of the portfolio
- Content can be reused in different places in the portfolio
- Possibility of navigating the portfolio by theme, discipline, competency, title, semester, date, or, using a search engine that enables you to filter by theme, semester, discipline, competency, title, date, or some other parameter

- **Sharing (managing access rights)**



- Students can choose to keep certain content private or to make it accessible only to their teacher
- Students can share certain elements with individual people of their choice, with their group, or with everyone
- **Options for personalization**
 - The tool allows you to personalize a profile page to introduce yourself
 - It is possible to customize the layout and to format content

Administrative and evaluation functions

- Student registration is easy and automated
- The tool provides quick and easy access to all student portfolios in order to facilitate the teacher's work
- The tool can be used for summative evaluation (grading) by allowing the teacher
 - to receive notification when students submit their portfolio for evaluation
 - to enter grades in the portfolio
 - to lock assignments submitted for evaluation (so that students cannot make changes to them while they are being evaluated)
 - to keep a copy of submitted works (in the event of a grade-review request)

Communication and collaboration functions

- Possibility of writing comments
- Possibility of uploading documents
- Possibility of receiving notifications (comments or feedback received, request for correction, etc.)
- Collaborative applications (forum, contact list, Chat, etc.)
- Possibility of collaborating with others on assignments in the same portfolio
- Integrated messaging using the portfolio tool

Guidance functions

- Possibility of providing students with templates or assignment models to include in their portfolio
- Possibility of adding instructions within the portfolio
- Possibility of imposing portfolio structure (organization)
- Availability of tutorials that explain technical functions in the portfolio
- Progress indicators (to indicate where students are at within the portfolio assignments, for example)

Features for sustainable use

- Possibility of exporting and importing portfolio content (PDFs, HTML, SCORM, etc.)
- Availability of the tool after the learning activity has ended



- Access to the tool after the course or program has ended

Type of research tool

Considering the essential functionalities you have identified, your goals, the characteristics of your students, the (human, material, and financial) resources available, and the other aspects of the context in which you want to use the portfolio, what type of tools you feel would be most suitable?

- Open portfolio (controlled by the student)
- Portfolio with a pre-set structure
- Custom portfolio
- Web site editors and blogs
- Office suite software (ideally online)
- Cloud solutions
- Other