University of Bedfordshire

Creating a portfolio

Introduction

A portfolio is a collection of **evidence** presented in a logical order. Content, format and length of a portfolio can vary significantly so you need to ensure that you follow your assignment brief when preparing a portfolio.

Types of portfolio

If you need to submit a portfolio, this will either be:

- **Paper-based** (i.e. a physical copy)

- **Electronic (e-portfolio)** (this will typically be completed through Pebble+ – an online platform provided by the University where you can collect and organise evidence related to your learning and personal development)

Regardless of format there are a number of factors to consider in terms of design and format. This resource provides an overview of areas to consider when preparing a portfolio.

Types of evidence

There are different types of evidence that could be included in a portfolio – as detailed below. It is not uncommon for lecturers to ask students to include more than one type of evidence.

Learning **Resources**

1) **Achievement documentation** - evidence of specific achievements and learning that has already occurred (such as qualifications, certificates, commendations or a CV).

2) *Written assignment* - Some lecturers may ask you to complete an essay / report and include this as part of your portfolio.

3) **Showcase of work** - Multiple pieces of work that has been completed by a student (such as architectural designs or pieces of art).

4) **Narrative of learning / development** – personal reflection of a process of own learning / decision making. For instance,

- Reflective journal / log / diary / blog
- How previous assignment feedback has been used
- Action plan

Presentation of evidence

It is worth considering how best to present your evidence within a portfolio. In addition to written text you might also consider using:

- Pictures
- Drawings
- Images
- Diagrams
- Tables
- Charts

Please note: Always check that your presentation format is in line with your assignment criteria.

Learning **Resources**

Structure

A portfolio is typically quite a large piece of work. It is therefore essential that you consider how your reader can be best guided around your assignment. The following are some fundamentals to consider:

1) **Planning** - Plan out how your work will be organised (even if you are creating an e-portfolio)*.*

2) **Main sections** - It is advisable to have a headed section for each part of your portfolio. You may also wish to number each section (this will help with cross referencing).

3) **Subsections** – It can be useful to break a main section down into a series of headed subsections. For instance, if you include a number of certificates, it is easier for a reader to navigate this evidence if each had a distinct location (indicated in the contents page) rather than if they were all in one single section. For example, Section 1 – Certificates; 1.1) GCSE certificates; 1.2) A level certificates; 1.3) Sports coaching award, etc.

4) **Signposting between sections** - It is common practice to cross reference between / within portfolio sections. This can be a very effective means of reducing repetition. If you use headed sections and subsections it is far easier to cross reference between parts of a portfolio. Likewise, numbering your pages can be useful when signposting.

   The following are examples of how you could signpost to parts of a portfolio:

   • 'This is discussed / outlined / addressed in section X'.

5) **Contents page** – It is useful to include a contents page so that readers know the order that evidence is presented and where specific pieces of evidence are located (i.e. page numbers). If you create an e-portfolio using Pebble+, you might consider creating a contents page which has hyperlinks to specific sections in place of page numbers.

Learning**Resources**

General tips

The following are tips related to collecting information for use within a portfolio:

- **Keep it up to date** – If you are keeping a reflective journal / diary / log / blog related to your learning, it is important that you update this on a regular basis. You should not wait until just before the hand in and then retrospectively complete each entry.

- **Be selective** – The final version of your portfolio must be concise. Ensure that you avoid tangential information or over-elaboration. When writing a portfolio it is usually easier if you initially include anything that seems relevant and edit content as needed.

- **Storage of data** – When creating a portfolio you are likely to have multiple electronic documents that need to be included. As you collect this evidence, it is advisable to label and date each document clearly and store within a single folder.

- **Confidentiality** - It is essential that you adhere to departmental regulations related to confidentiality when completing a portfolio. For instance, if you are keeping a record of placement experiences, it would be inappropriate to include patient / client / pupil names.

Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit: **l**

lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub

Learning **Resources**