PORT FOLIO GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE

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Career and Internship Center

Purpose of a Portfolio

A portfolio can best be described as a culmination of your experiences, all in one location. While your resume is a snapshot of your experiences, your portfolio is meant to showcase each relevant project, accomplishment, or experience in full detail. The purpose of a portfolio is to allow you to better market yourself to an employer by providing samples of your work and skill in an easy-to-view format.

For many fields, a portfolio is an essential tool for anyone conducting a job search, as it can not only contain samples of work that otherwise would not fit onto a resume or cover letter, but also contains any key documents that may be of use to the employer when reviewing your application. Portfolios offer a greater level of flexibility to the applicant, as they can be developed in print format or digitally. Finally, since not all applicants may choose to use a portfolio, simply having one and providing it to an employer may cause you to stand out among potential hires.

A strong portfolio can support your candidacy in a variety of areas, including but not limited to:

Demonstrating your transferrable skills

Honors, awards and recognition

Education and training

Work experience in the form of products, samples and projects

This guide is meant to provide you with the best practices associated with developing a high-quality portfolio, as identified by the University of Baltimore Career and Internship Center.

Things to Consider

When planning to create a portfolio, it is important to take time and consider yourself. Since a portfolio represents you, your skills and work, and your areas of interest, it is necessary for you to know and understand these concepts well before starting. Ask yourself the following questions prior to starting the development of your portfolio:

- What do I do well?

- Who is the audience I'm developing this portfolio for?

- What areas am I interested in working in? What tasks would I want to perform? What type of work environment am I looking for?

- What skills have I shown that are relevant to the prospective employer?

- What experiences best exemplify what I hope to get across to an employer?

- How do I want to present the contents to an employer reading the portfolio?

- Why am I creating this portfolio?

Master Portfolio Vs. Targeted Portfolio

An important distinction must be made between the two main types of portfolios – Master Portfolios and Targeted Portfolios. Master Portfolios are a collection of all materials that you believe might be useful to include in a portfolio someday. They may not all be relevant to the job you currently hope to attain, but they provide evidence of some aspect of your character, experience, skills, achievements, and so on. The mantra to keep in mind when collecting material for a Master Portfolio is "when in doubt, don't throw it out". You never know when something that seems insignificant now will end up being crucial to your portfolio in the future! However, please note that you should never send out your Master Portfolio to an employer. This is meant only to help you keep track of your content so that you can easily find items to add to your Targeted Portfolio.

Targeted Portfolios are created by taking specific materials from your Master Portfolio and combining them into a smaller, more focused portfolio. In this way, your Master Portfolio serves as the foundation for any future Targeted Portfolios you create. This focus on specific materials that directly showcase your skills in connection to the position of interest reinforces the idea that you possess qualities that make you a strong candidate for a specific position. A key concept keep in mind when targeting your portfolio is to target the content to the information in the job posting. Make sure that you are giving the employer the content and skill set that they are asking for.

However, it is also important to not overload your portfolio with content to the point that it is difficult to navigate or that it does not seem to focus on the content related to the job posting. As a result, the mantra for Targeted Portfolios when you are unsure if something should be added is "when in doubt, leave it out" in order to keep the portfolio concise and effective.

Do I Need A Portfolio?

As with resumes, portfolios vary by industry. However, portfolios are particularly helpful in certain fields, where having a high-quality portfolio is as important as a high-quality resume, if not more. Some fields in which portfolios are considered standard and especially important are the following:

- Simulation and Game Design
- Photography and Videography
- Advertising
- Graphic Design

- Art
- Writing
- Web Development

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that portfolios can be useful in many other fields.

Contents of Your Portfolio

The contents of your portfolio should reflect your work through samples and documents. Depending on your field, the contents of your portfolio may differ, but overall they must provide an accurate representation of what you bring to your potential employer and they should be professionally targeted. Remember to focus the content based on the job posting. Keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive and that many more items can be considered for a portfolio. Here are some examples of the variety of items that can be found within a portfolio:

- Targeted class projects

- Internship work samples

- Publicity samples (advertisements, press releases, social media posts, etc.)

- Technological skill demonstrations

- Images or drawings

- Writing samples

- Video/audio clips and samples (linked or embeded)

- Data demonstrating contribution to organizational success

- Awards, certificates, licenses and honors

- Professional social media accounts

- Photographs and screenshots from presentations you've made

- Creative products

- Designs or logos you've created

- Testimonials

- Surveys or reports you're developed that demonstrate your skills or customer satisfaction

- Examples showing volunteering or service (letters of appreciation for service, volunteer organization affiliations, articles recognizing your service, etc.)

- Projects on which you are currently working – these can be listed under a Work in Progress section and showcase steps of the creative process in real time

Samples by Industry

Industrial Design

Hand drawings and renderings, AutoCAD projects (particularly if they ask for a progression of ideas/designs)

Digital Media

Print, digital, and interactive works

Graphic Design

Logos, banners, websites, samples demonstrating use of Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, etc. (identify software if specifically asked or mentioned in the job posting)

Arts and Sciences

Writing samples, published works, lab reports, certifications, awards, etc.

Business

Business plans, writing samples, competition examples, certifications, awards, etc.

Graduate School Applications

Writing samples, research experience, published articles, letters of recommendation

Portfolio Examples

https://bit.ly/cic-portfolio-guide

Portfolio Styles (Print Vs. Online)

Portfolios typically are developed in either print or online formats, depending on the area of interest and the candidate's technical skills. As a result, portfolios may have entirely different styles depending on the format in which they exist. This section breaks down some tips on how each style can be approached when beginning to develop your portfolio. Keep in mind that, when having an in-person meeting, it is generally recommended that you bring a hard copy of your portfolio or a laptop or tablet if it is digital.

Print

A portfolio book (featuring pockets and dividers to easily display work and keep things organized)

Begin with a table of contents to make it easy to navigate to specific content Keeping documents organized by category (for example, organizing them based on the skill that they highlight) can assist in easily finding the documents you need at the right time

Keep contents in clear page protectors

During an interview, bring up aspects of your portfolio when possible in order to show the samples to an employer. Sending a PDF copy of the portfolio to the employer is also encouraged

11" by 17" is the standard size preferred by employers within the creative disciplines. Large-scale plans can be presented using a ½ scale or ¼ scale

Keep it consistent. Portfolio documents should generally be uniform in terms of paper quality and type, ink color, font style, and so forth (the exceptions being art samples)

Group your work samples into appropriate categories (for example, you could group by skills they demonstrate or by the type of project)

Online

Keep it consistent. Branding, font style, and webpage format should generally remain uniform throughout the portfolio

Use an appropriate digital format. In general, a PDF format is recommended in order to preserve the portfolio's current format

Use fonts and key words that computer programs will identify. Computer programs have been developed that scan resumes for key words in order to do preliminary screening out of candidates. You will want to make sure that the fonts that you use are easily recognizable for the computers and that you use key words that the computers will be likely to register

Get creative. Online portfolios naturally have greater flexibility than print ones and can hold more information and work samples, although they still need to be edited down for clarity and content. Take advantage of this and of online tools that can help you to develop your online brand

Show your technical skills. If you have experience in/are studying fields such as Graphic Design and similar areas, developing your own site for your portfolio serves as a concrete example of your own skills which can help you to further stand out to employers

Make sure it's accessible. Not being able to find your link, or clicking it and finding that it's broken, will only serve to make you seem like you are unprepared and perhaps lacking in technical skills. Double check any links and webpages on your portfolio in advance of putting it on your resume to avoid any mishaps

If you are a technological or design expert, **consider how you can make your portfolio stand out from the rest.** Do you use a particularly striking color scheme, fantastic animations to engage the audience, or do you make the resume interactive (assuming such ideas reflect your skill set based on what the job posting mentions)? Anything can be effective if done well - people have even made their portfolio websites into video games based around what the employer was looking for and their personal skill set. Consider how you can implement your strengths into the portfolio and make the website itself into a representation of your abilities

Here are some examples of websites you can use to build your online portfolio:

Please note that some of the resources listed are industry-specific and may not be geared towards your area of interest. Websites for making portfolios may have additional features which may not be available for free.

portfolio.adobe.com **behance.net** **carbonmade.com** **cargo.site**

portfoliopen.com **wix.com** **wordpress.com** **coroflot.com**

crevado.com **dribbble.com** **iwebfolio.com** **portfoliobox.net**

Common Portfolio Mistakes

Just like a resume, cover letter, or an interview, there are a handful of common mistakes that can negatively impact employers' impression of you. Here are some examples of mistakes to avoid when constructing your portfolio:

- Lack of consistency throughout the portfolio
- Content is unorganized and/or difficult to go through quickly
- Portfolio is not up to date regarding your accomplishments/information
- Not enough samples provided to effectively speak to your experiences
- Failing to provide easy ways to contact you
- For visual samples, not providing a small description of the concept, the purpose of the project and the results
- Low-quality images/poor formatting
- Web-based graphics standard is 72ppi
- Lack of referrals or testimonials from previous clients

Additional Tips

Tailor your resume to your portfolio's content to limit redundancy.
You want the resume to complement and to be complemented by the other documents in your portfolio, as this will create a well-rounded set of materials without it being repetitive.

Conduct informational interviews while developing your portfolio.
Informational interviews involve meeting with a professional to discuss the field/position of interest and to gain the benefit of their experiences as you move to the next step in your career. These interviews can help shape your idea of what information employers most want to see in a portfolio, as well as how you can present your accomplishments in a manner that reflects the needs of the employer. Please reach out to your career coach to learn more about informational interviewing.

Contact Us

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You may schedule an appointment with your Career Coach by logging into UBworks (found on the right side of the MyUB portal).