

THMT 3388

Option C: Development of a Professional Portfolio

Note: This work term project can only be completed for THMT 3388 (co-op work term III). Once a student has completed the portfolio option, s/he should make it a priority to continuously update the content on an ongoing basis.

What is a portfolio?

It is a 'toolbox' that contains work samples which profile your skills, abilities, accomplishments and the scope of your experience.

Why should I have a portfolio?

To demonstrate to potential employers that you have superior skills and experience worth considering. Portfolios are a great visual aid for your presentation to an employer. A well organized portfolio indicates that you are a student who is serious about seeking new opportunities. By providing additional credible information in an interview, you make the interviewer's job easier.

How do I build my portfolio?

- 1) Define the skills or accomplishments you want to emphasize
- 2) Identify when you used those skills or what your role was in the project
 - a. What were your objectives?
 - b. What was the outcome/result?
- 3) Include your resumé and references

What should I include?

Materials you might include are:

FEEDBACK:

Letters of recommendation from employers/professors
Thank-you letters/notes
Awards, scholarships or grants
Performance reviews

WRITING:

Samples of writing from essays
Sponsorship letters
Business plan samples
Professional correspondence (letters, e-mail, etc.)
Editorial samples (newsletters, newspaper articles, etc.)

FINANCIAL/STATISTICS:

Budgeting – developing, managing budgets, etc.
Pie charts, bar graphs, etc.
Statistical analysis

MARKETING:

PowerPoint slide samples
Pictures while presenting or speaking
Brochures/flyers created
Marketing plans
Web promotion (Facebook groups/pages, Twitter accounts, Web sites, ad banners, etc.)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

Company newsletters
Memorandum samples
Training manual samples
CERTIFICATION RECEIVED:
Computer software application training
Work-site training completed
First aid training completed
Industry certifications

NEW/SOCIAL/MULTI-MEDIA:

Electronic resume

Personal web site
Screen shots of social media content and professional interaction (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
Blog
Podcast
Web site contribution
Video/CD
CREATIVE AND VISUAL SAMPLES:
Photography
Brochure
Copy and layout
Graphic design for print
Digital graphic design

How do I organize my portfolio?

Choose a binder or portfolio case that best suits your needs. Many students use a zippered, 3-ring binder. This allows you to use clear plastic protective sleeves to display your work. It makes it easy to add, remove or re-organize examples of your work.

Divide your work according to type of material and use tabbed dividers to clearly label each section. You might have a section for feedback; another for accounting; one for marketing; and another for your writing samples or photography, for example. The most important and relevant information should be placed closer to the front of your portfolio. A title page and table of contents adds a finishing touch.

Label each piece indicating the objective, your role, and the results, if applicable. You want to make it easy for the reader/interviewer to determine your contribution to the project (i.e. you might have developed the lay out but did not write the copy) and what you hoped to achieve with the piece. For example, you may have put together PowerPoint slides for a presentation done at school or at work. You may not have been the one doing the speaking in front of the group, but you may have pictures of the speaker with your slides in the background. Explaining this in your portfolio will allow your reader to gain context from your included material.

Place personal information at the back of your portfolio and label it as such. This section would include your resume, transcript, reference list, awards, certificates, evaluations and letters of recommendation.

Include your best work. There is no need for you to include every sample of your work, only the best. If you have worked on 10 marketing plans, include 1-2 examples demonstrating your best work. When including class work, use clean copies and remove notes/grades from professors.

How would I present my portfolio? Always take your portfolio to interviews. Refer to your portfolio in your cover letter and/or resume. In responding to interviewer's questions, refer to examples in your portfolio when appropriate.

Use an example in your portfolio to illustrate your answer. If you are asked about PowerPoint, present your portfolio and turn to a PowerPoint presentation. Point to your opening slides to illustrate how you organized your presentation and turn to other slides as you describe your presentation. (However, in your eagerness to sell yourself to the interviewer, be careful not to give the full presentation again). Outline the presentation you made using an example from your portfolio. This allows the interviewer to get a good sense of your organizational skills as well as your eye for design.

Questions to ask yourself before you submit your portfolio:

1. Is all the material in my portfolio really my own work?

A portfolio is a collection of work samples that give a prospective employer an idea of what you have done and what you are capable of doing. Every document, brochure, set of presentation slides or other samples in your portfolio should reflect a major, if not complete, involvement on your part. What you want to avoid at all costs is an employer asking you in an interview “Did you write this, design this?” and having to say no.

Including a PowerPoint where you essentially checked the spelling and made copies, or a brochure produced by an outside consultant at meetings you attended, or an annual report you handed out at events on behalf of your company – *unless* in this case you have clearly identified your role in a note, “This brochure was produced by M T & L for an event that I attended for the client” – cannot really be considered your own work samples and should not be included in your portfolio.

2. Have I done my best to show my range of skills?

Remember that everyone knows you have not been in the work force forever. But just because you haven’t done something as part of paid employment does not mean you haven’t done it, and aren’t able to do it. If your co-op terms have not given you the opportunity to write a business plan for example, but you have written one for a class you have taken, include a key piece from it as a sample. It is quite acceptable to mix academic product, volunteer product and work term product on your portfolio – identify them by type; “business plan sample” rather than by dividing them into work and school categories.

Remember that an employer is going to consider whatever is included in your portfolio as evidence of all you know how to do – if it’s not there they might think you couldn’t do it.

3. Does my portfolio look more like a collection of everything I have ever done or like a presentation of my best work?

Remember a portfolio is a display, not a file folder. If you made brochures or flyers all summer long in your co-op you don’t need to include all of them, just a few of your best ones and hopefully each of these should be different. Remember, the object is range and quality of skills – what you know how to do – and not to give evidence of everything you have ever done.

4. Have I put as much work into presentation and organization as I did into contents?

Do you have a cover page? A table of contents? Are the divider tags and notes explaining what each sample, and your role in its production? Are there labelled dividers so a reader can work from the table of contents to find particular material? Do your sample labels clearly explain what the objective-role-result (or words to that effect) of the sample were? Does it look like professional work or a scrapbook?

5. Have you done what you could to give a sense of yourself as a potential employee in your portfolio?

Do you have letters, notes or emails of appreciation or thanks from people you have worked with, either in the workplace or through volunteer involvement? Even a quick email from a former supervisor saying “great job” is worth including. What about customer service awards? If you don’t have any material like this you might consider contacting a few key people and asking them to write something short for you on letterhead to put into your portfolio.

6. Have you considered visuals and social/multi media?

Employers these days expect new hires to have design sense as well as writing sense and to be tech savvy. A text only portfolio can look a little dry and also one-dimensional. Is there any creative work you can include? Any photos you have taken? Even recreational photography shows you know how to handle a camera and chances are you will get handed a camera sometime in your career. If anything you have written has ever gone up on a web page consider including a screen shot of that rather than just the copy. And finally if you have been involved in any form of social media in a professional way, include that too. Even posting a notice for a Business and Tourism Society meeting on Facebook counts, or any postings you have made to a Podcast site, both are worth including to round out your range.

Evaluation Portfolio Project THMT 3388

Student's Name: _____

Faculty Co-op Advisor: _____

Portfolio presentation

High quality

Satisfactory

Resubmit

Overall professional standard:

Comments:

Visual and graphic quality:

Comments:

Organization and logical
presentation of materials:

Comments:

Material identified, labelled and
appropriately credited:

Comments:

Professional communication

Grammar:

Comments:

Spelling and punctuation:

Comments:

Professional style and expression:

Comments:

Individual professional content

Resume:

Comments:

Reference list:

Comments:

Transcripts:

Comments:

Awards:

Comments:

High quality

Satisfactory

Resubmit

Diplomas or certificates:

Comments:

Work term reports:

Comments:

Job evaluations from supervisors:

Comments:

Letters of thanks and appreciation:

Comments:

Samples of work checklist <i>(Note employer consent may be necessary in some cases)</i>	High Quality	Satisfactory	Revisions required/resubmit	Missing and/or required
Feedback:				
Letters of recommendation from employers/professors				
Thank-you letters/notes				
Awards, scholarships or grants				
Performance reviews				
Writing:				
Samples of writing from essays				
Sponsorship letters				
Business plan samples				
Professional correspondence (letters, e-mail, etc.)				
Editorial samples (newsletters, newspaper articles, etc.)				
Financial/Statistics:				
Budgeting - developing, managing budgets, etc.				
Pie charts, bar graphs, etc.				
Statistical analysis				
Marketing:				
PowerPoint slide samples				
Pictures while presenting or speaking				
Brochures/flyers created				
Marketing plans				
Web promotion (Facebook groups/pages, Twitter accounts, Web sites, ad banners, etc.)				
Internal Communication:				
Company newsletters				
Memorandum samples				
Training manual samples				
Certification Received:				
Computer software application training				
Work-site training completed				
First aid training completed				
Other (if not listed above)				
New/Social/Multi-media:				
Electronic resume				
Personal web site				

Screen shots of social media content and professional interaction (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)				
Blog				
Podcast				
Web site contribution				
Video/CD				
Creative and Visual Samples:				
Photography				
Brochure				
Copy and layout				
Graphic design for print				
Digital graphic design				

Overall Grade:

Pass

Fail

Resubmit

Date Resubmission Due: _____

Comments:

- Would you use this portfolio as an example of a model student portfolio?
- Does this portfolio contain material that is clearly the student's own, rather than just the organization's product?
- Does the resubmit require changes primarily to organization and presentation?
- Does the resubmit require additions to content?
- Does the resubmit require editing and correction of samples?
- What materials do you suggestion the student add in future to develop this portfolio?
- Faculty signature after first/final assessment:
- Faculty signature after resubmit/final assessment: