

# How to create a portfolio

From: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/portfolios.htm>

**You need a portfolio to showcase your work and to help to demonstrate your skills to prospective employers** . Nothing impresses more than a beautifully presented portfolio at an interview. But don't send it unless requested. Always bring it with you if you have an interview.

- Go for **quality, not quantity**: employers will probably spend only a few minutes looking at your portfolio, especially at interview.
- **Put your portfolio on a web site** if possible and provide the web link on your CV.
- **You may be asked to talk about the context** for your portfolio examples at interview: where you got the idea for the piece; what your influences were; how you went about writing it etc.

## What should my portfolio include?

**A good portfolio would probably have most of the following**

- An **index** of the contents
- Your **CV** including your interests and any evidence of the skills required for the position.  
Your CV should give the impression that you **think like a person already in the position**.
- Perhaps a profile or personal statement (and Introduction or Philosophy of \_\_\_\_\_)
- Your **key achievements and skills**
- Examples of your work of course!  
Place the best and **most relevant work first** and start and finish with strong pieces of work.

Other resources:

[http://www.quintcareers.com/job\\_search\\_portfolio.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job_search_portfolio.html)

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2046018\\_make-portfolio.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2046018_make-portfolio.html)

[http://www.ehow.com/list\\_6855245\\_portfolio-tips.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_6855245_portfolio-tips.html)

From Wiki How: <http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Career-Portfolio>

- [How to Analyze-Your-Skills-and-Job-Options](#)
- [How to Use-Your-wikiHow-Skills-to-Advance-Your-Career](#)
- [How to Find-Your-Dream-Career](#)
- [How to Take-Command-of-Your-Career](#)
- [How to Inventory-Your-Knowledge-and-Skills-to-Write-Articles-for-wikiHow](#)
- [How to Create a Screencast](#)

## How to Make a Good Career Portfolio

By [Carol Thomas](#), eHow Contributor [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4896372\\_make-good-career-portfolio.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4896372_make-good-career-portfolio.html)

1. Collect examples that document your skills and experience. Include your resume, performance appraisals, awards, publications, reports, transcripts, letters of recommendation, licenses, testimonials and actual work products whenever possible. Add brochures from conferences and workshops you have attended. Think of this stage as a search for evidence that will prove your value as an employee.
2. Analyze your collection. Determine what categories your documents represent. Do you want to showcase different skills you have developed? If you are looking for a teaching position, for example, you could group your documents by subjects you have taught. Continue adding to your portfolio by locating more items for categories that appear less documented.
3. Select the most significant items for each category. Even though this step requires removing material, throw nothing away. Keep any items you decide to remove from your portfolio in a separate secondary folder. If you change your career objective in the future, you might need to consult this secondary folder.

4. Design your portfolio's overall appearance. Include a table of contents and index. Provide captions for photos and any other items that are not self-explanatory. Place your material in an attractive binder. A dark three ring notebook with plastic page protectors provides a convenient format. Use tabbed dividers to separate your sections.
5. Photocopy material in your portfolio, such as resumes that you want to leave with a potential employer. Create color photocopies of color originals. Consider also creating an electronic portfolio to provide easily accessible information about you that exceeds what you have placed in your resume. To host your online portfolio, choose a web site used by others in your profession.
6. Evaluate your finished portfolio. Does the portfolio contain a representative sampling of the best of your accomplishments? Is the portfolio itself a well designed example of your work? Remember that potential employers will be judging you based upon its appearance. Get a second opinion about the quality of your career portfolio from someone who works in your field.
7. Add to your portfolio throughout your career. You should consider your career portfolio as a work in progress rather than as a finished product. Provide immediate documentation for every new job accomplishment.
8. Take your career portfolio with you to each job interview. Be prepared to support statements about your past performance with specific examples from the portfolio.

## **Portfolio development** <http://www.yorku.ca/fes/careers/jobsearch/Portfolio.htm>

A career portfolio is a collection of documents, artifacts or materials which are representative of your academic, career, and personal development. It is a reflection of who you are, what you want to achieve in your career and personal development.

Portfolios can:

- Show your achievements
- Document the scope and quality of your experience and training
- Demonstrate your skills and abilities

### **Three types of portfolios**

#### **1. Comprehensive**

Complete collection of items which reflect all skills and achievements. No size or length limitations. Rarely if ever distributed or displayed. Use for your own benefit: select appropriate items from this collection to create a targeted portfolio.

#### **2. Targeted**

Contains items relevant to specific employer or industry. Complete yet succinct - no more than 20 pages. May be loaned to employer before or after interview. May also be shown or presented to employer during interview.

#### **3. Portfolio-resume hybrid**

Short - usually no more than four pages, including resume. Distributed widely. Given - not loaned - to employer. May be left with employer after interview or used as an application package.

## How to create a portfolio

### Step 1: Self-assessment

Look at your skills, abilities and past experience to determine what you have to offer an employer. Once you know what you need to show prospective employers, you are ready to find artifacts that will illustrate your capabilities.

Artifacts are what we call the materials that you add to your portfolio. Here are some general tips to help you choose your artifacts:

- Only include something if you have a good reason to.
- Try looking through your artifacts and think – is this important?
- Think of skills you have that you want to illustrate – when have you used them and how?
- What have you done that you are really proud of?
- Think like an employer – what would they want to see?

Since you have limited space in your portfolio, you need to know why you are including something. Be sure to choose carefully. For each artifact, include a memo that explains its importance. You may also want to include a short personal anecdote that elaborates on or gives more significance to the artifact. If you choose to make a professional portfolio, these memos will explain your artifacts to whoever is looking at your portfolio.

Examples of the type of information to include in your memo:

- Name of activity/experience
- Main participants
- Date
- Describe what took place
- Why was it important? What did it represent?
- Challenges you faced and handled (if any)
- What changes/compromises did you have to make as you went along?
- What policy or procedure changes were made due to your input?
- Benefits or outcomes of the effort
- Were you given more responsibilities? Why?
- Were you promoted or given recognition?
- Skills used/developed (name at least 3)

### Step 2: Portfolio content

Evidence of your accomplishments such as publications, writing samples (e.g. proposals or reports), PowerPoint presentations, a program/schedule/agenda from an event you've planned, critical paths or planning documents and examples of design/artwork can be included. To get started, here is a list of things you might want to include in your portfolio:

1. Table of contents
2. Academic/personal information/Activities
  - résumé
  - academic transcripts, degrees, diplomas or certificates
  - course descriptions
  - fact sheet that details your hobbies and interests

1. Personal Strengths, teamwork and people skills, Problem solving, budgeting, planning and organization, time management, energy, discipline, motivation, persistence, responsibility, dependability, etc.
2. Leadership positions held, Participation in team sports, Volunteer service, Organizations joined, Public speaking/presentations or performances, Awards, Travel
  - testing results
  - list of references
  - attendance records (school and work)
3. Skills/technical abilities
  - writing samples
  - documentation of technical/computer skills
  - evidence of capstone project
  - performance evaluations
  - letters of recommendation
4. Professional abilities
  - certification or licensure documents
  - list of conferences and workshops attended
  - letters of commendation/thanks for service
  - internship or co-op summary report
  - list of professional organization involvement
5. Honours/award information
  - certificates of scholarships, research grants or other awards received
  - nomination to honours/academic organizations
  - newspaper articles about your achievements

### **Step 3: Portfolio design**

A portfolio is usually presented in a zippered case, three ring binder or a multimedia format with print documents. Most importantly, organize and categorize your contents with a purpose in mind. Label the different sections of your portfolio to aid in identifying materials.

#### **1. Reverse chronological**

Graduate, Undergraduate (first year, second year, etc.), High School (if applicable). The most relevant materials should be placed near the front of your portfolio since the employer is most likely to see these materials first.

#### **2. Functional**

Academic Experience, Internship Experience, Awards or Analytical, Communication, and Technical Skills.

#### **3. Thematic**

For a theme such as "Business and Sustainability": Environmental Management Systems, Environmental Auditing, Sustainability Reporting.

### **Portfolio do's:**

- Design each section so that it is easy to scan – use sufficient white space and consistent font, style and spacing.
- Keep in mind that everyone's portfolio is different. It is a reflection of yourself and should be as unique as you are.
- Remember to not feel discouraged because your portfolio isn't done yet. It will never be truly finished and it will grow as you do.
- Update your portfolio as often as possible. It's just as important to have an up-to-date portfolio as it is to have an updated résumé.

## Portfolio don'ts:

- Have a large, unfocused collection of samples.
- Include marked up samples with grammatical or typographical errors.
- Don't take anything to an interview that is too personal and/or inappropriate.
- Present someone else's work as your own. Give the context of the sample as necessary.

## Incorporating your portfolio into an interview

Your portfolio will not win the interview. A good Portfolio is an aid, but you must sell yourself – using the portfolio to assist you in selling your skills to the employer.

Remember to always take your portfolio to an interview and try and respond to interviewer's questions with portfolio examples where appropriate. There are two primary ways to incorporate your portfolio in an interview:

### 1. Directly refer to portfolio

Interviewer: Describe a team project you initiated and tell me about your role in the project.

Student: During my last year in university, I joined a group of students interested in a community gardening project. After successfully approaching organizations and businesses for support, my role evolved into being the fundraiser for the group. Here is a newspaper photo of me accepting a cheque from one of our donors. By honing my interpersonal and presentation skills, I've generated more than \$3,000 for this project.

### 2. Request permission to share portfolio

Interviewer: How would your former supervisors describe you?

Student: Would you mind if I showed you a section of my portfolio to help answer that question?

Interviewer: No...

Student: You commented earlier on the fast-paced nature of consulting and the need for effective prioritization. I'm proud of the fact that my last supervisor, as you'll note in this portion of the letter, praised me on remaining poised and professional under pressure and meeting the deadlines for three different projects in one week.

## What's a Portfolio For? Who Needs One and 5 Tips for a Good One

April 27th, 2010 by [Guest Author](#) Posted in [Job Search](#), [Most Popular](#), [Resume Writing](#)  
<http://www.resumark.com/blog/zguest/what%E2%80%99s-a-portfolio-for-who-needs-one-and-5-tips-for-a-good-one/>

A portfolio is not just for artists any more. It is simply a collection of work you have done, displayed in a visual manner. Your portfolio can be hardcopy or digital, but it should definitely reflect the best you have done in a relevant work role.

It can include items done in school or even volunteer work, but they should be professional quality, have a clearly stated purpose and include results, when possible.

Professionals who could benefit from the use of a portfolio include anyone in marketing or advertising, writers, editors, anyone who works on websites in any capacity, and even those responsible for financial planning or accounting, with those nice colorful graphs and detailed plans. Anything that you put a lot of work into that can be represented in a visual way will work in a portfolio. A computer programmer, for instance, can include a visual of the code of a project

alongside the final user visual. An interior designer can use before and after shots. A lawyer can insert newspaper clippings along with their briefings.

1. Make your portfolio items relevant – rotate them so that the most relevant items are up in front for each position you are interviewing for.
2. If it's a hardcopy portfolio, invest in a good quality case – not a cheap plastic one with pages that will rip. Make a good impression, because you want them to think that you are worth every penny.
3. If it's digital, make sure that you know how to operate it well in advance of any interview. Make sure you know how to manage all the views. Bring your own laptop and make sure that your power source is fully juiced. It's best to have the portfolio operate from your hard drive, because you don't want to have to rely on wi-fi from your prospective employer.
4. Make it easy to read. Include bits on each project about what the piece was trying to accomplish, and what the results were. But don't overdo the text element; it should be primarily a visual display.
5. Practice. Walk through your portfolio out loud – several times. Don't let questions swerve you off course. Ask a friend to play the employer, if possible. Slow down, and be sure that you are allowing your audience to see what you are displaying (for instance, don't have the book or screen turned towards you – turn it towards them).

Notice the key word that kept cropping up above – relevant. **You can and should remake your portfolio for every interview for every company.** Make an effort to find things you can present that will excite this next prospective employer. Many people are really very visual, and if you have samples that can give your interviewer a tactile element, all the better. You will stand out from the crowd and they will come away with a good impression of you.

**About the Author:** Linda White has been a writer and editor for over 15 years. She provides communications services to businesses to help them put their best foot forward. These include writing, editing, publicity and marketing services for businesses large and small.

Read more: <http://www.resumark.com/blog/zquest/what%e2%80%99s-a-portfolio-for-who-needs-one-and-5-tips-for-a-good-one/#ixzz18lrCtz40>