

# Showcase your experience with A CAREER PORTFOLIO

HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

*A Career Portfolio can be used in the job search as a creative alternative to the standard resume and cover letter approach. Already popularly used in occupational areas such as education and advertising, the Career Portfolio is making inroads with employers in other areas as well.*

*Rather than simply listing your skills, activities, interests, and education and experience, a Career Portfolio permits job-seekers to better illustrate those aspects of themselves by including **concrete examples** such as: class papers, awards, writing samples, transcripts, photographs, certificates, etc.*

*A prospective employer can gain a **fuller picture of who you are** and what qualifications you can bring to a particular workplace. Those facets of your personality and professionalism, which might have gone unnoticed with a simple resume, can stand out with the Career Portfolio.*

## UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

### Why create a Career Portfolio?

- A Career Portfolio can help you illustrate to prospective employers your career and professional accomplishments, talents, abilities, activities, and attitudes.
- The Career Portfolio can also serve as a marketing tool, providing employers a preview of your performance as a potential employee

### How can a Career Portfolio help in the job search?

- Markets your capabilities
- Documents the quality and quantity of your professional development
- Demonstrates prior work or learning experiences
- Sets you apart from other candidates for the job position
- Illustrates proficiencies during or after an interview
- Establishes the habit of documenting your accomplishments and results
- Creates a personal data base

## HOW TO DEVELOP A PORTFOLIO

### Step 1: Know Yourself

An effective portfolio needs to represent you and your strengths—you should present both your skills/abilities and personal characteristics. Thus, you need to know what careers you are interested in, the qualifications they require, and the skills, abilities, and knowledge that you have acquired which make you qualified for those careers. Before creating your portfolio, ask yourself:

- What do I do well?
- How do I accomplish the tasks that I am good at?
- What tasks do I want to take part in?
- Who do I want to read my portfolio?
- Why am I creating a portfolio?
- How can I exemplify my skills, abilities, and knowledge to my reader?

### Step 2: Getting Started - Collecting Materials

In order to begin creating your portfolio, you need to gather materials to put into it. Collect evidence of all your achievements, accomplishments, experiences, and skills or abilities. If you do not possess evidence, then consider reconstructing some items. The content of what items you collect will vary according to your career goals, however some general items to include are:

#### *Community Activities*

- Outline of a plan you designed to lead a program or presentation
- Records you maintained in an event or activity
- Feedback you received for helping with a project
- Agenda discussing what you accomplished or were involved in
- Evaluation written by a supervisor or colleague
- Pictures of members participating in an event you helped to plan
- Newspaper clipping describing event to which you contributed

***Classroom/School Experiences***

- Example of an assignment with special comments from an instructor
- Picture or representation of a creation for a class project
- Report on a topic of special interest
- Outline of a presentation
- Transcript of grades, if applicable
- Positive evaluation received from an instructor or supervisor
- Summary or example of a research project
- Example of a publication or impressive paper
- Assessment instruments and results

***Academic Recognition***

- Letter or certificate of scholarships
- Letter or certificate for Dean's List
- Summary of scholarly research or projects
- Newspaper articles or any recognition of special honors
- Items focusing on extracurricular activities
- Award for participation in an event
- Awards for placing in competitions
- Pictures of team or individual participation in an event
- Letter of recommendation from a coach, advisor, or any academic source
- Materials from conferences or workshops you attended, participated, or presented
- Awards and honors for leadership

***Special Skills***

- Examples of handouts, letters, memos, reports, charts, graphs, brochures, etc.
- Documentation of knowledge in a foreign language
- Evidence of a hobby, craft, certification, or topic of special interest
- Evidence of computer or multi-media skills
- Samples of communication/writing skills

***Work-Related Experiences***

- Resume describing each job held
- Letter of recommendation from past or present employer
- Positive performance evaluation
- Recognition from supervisor or customer for performance
- Resume indicating relevant previous employment
- Training/workshop packets or handouts
- Annual report of accomplishments

***Personal Attributes***

- Autobiography
- Character references supporting your strengths
- Essay focusing on career goals or personal career statement
- Appropriate personal pictures

**Step 3: Filtering Through the Materials**

Only include the items that are necessary to your career pursuits. The portfolio should be long enough to exemplify your assets, yet not so overwhelming in length so as to discourage a potential employer from reading it (15 – 25 pages). Consider tailoring your portfolio directly to a desired job. If the job asks for teamwork, public speaking, and computer and communication skills, then only include items that prove you possess these skills.

**Step 4: Final Touches**

The presentation of the portfolio is important. Include a table of contents, tabs, captions, and whatever else you would like in order for it to appear organized, reader-friendly, and versatile. Possible portfolio holders include binders, artist portfolio cases, or zipper cases. Clear sleeves to protect the materials can be purchased separately. Captions should be included in order to tie the reader to the importance of the item.

You can make your portfolio stand out by adding a reflective essay, in which you unify the contents of the portfolio. An essay may include a stated purpose of the portfolio, explanation behind the relation of educational and career goals to content of portfolio, and a reflection about what was learned from creating the portfolio, as well as what you plan to achieve in the future.

**Step 5: Check it Out**

Read for typos, spelling, grammar, and formatting problems. Then pass it on to a friend to look over also. Talk through the sections of your portfolio with a friend, thinking about which parts you may elaborate on in an interview, if you plan to look over it together. If you plan to leave the portfolio with an employer, than make sure that it is readable and self-explanatory.

**Step 6: Sharing the Portfolio**

If a portfolio is not requested prior to an interview, you can take it with you and offer it for viewing near the end of the meeting. It can also be displayed during the interview. However, leave the viewing option up to the employer so that he/she can either view it with you or after you leave.

A scaled down version of a portfolio is another option. You can leave copies with the interviewer to keep, however make sure the copies are of good quality. Also, keep the items relevant to the position you are seeking. Other options for allowing an employer to view your portfolio are through the internet, CD-ROMs, multi-media presentations, and audio/video discs. Electronic portfolios over the internet are becoming popular due to the convenient viewing and sharing of items. The following site can help you put together an electronic portfolio:

[www.career.fsu.edu/portfolio/](http://www.career.fsu.edu/portfolio/)

**PORTFOLIO TIPS**

- Collect items that represent a broad range of skills
- Select and tailor the items you include to match each job for which you apply
- Choose only the best examples of your work
- Design pages to have impact and to be easy to read
- Select artifacts that present concrete evidence of your skills
- Label each item for easy identification
- Make your portfolio unique and creative
- Make sure it appears professional and is free of errors

**HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

Hughes-Trigg Student Center

214-768-2266 (phone)

214-768-4292 (fax)

Visit us anytime at [www.smu.edu/career](http://www.smu.edu/career)

**PORTFOLIO EXAMPLE #1 - Example for a Teacher/Educator****TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Photo with Brief Biography and Contact Information	1
Resume	2
Coursework Information	3
Sample from Research Course Project	4
Evaluation of Research Course Project	5
Letter of Recommendation from Research Statistics Professor	6
Letter of Recommendation from Previous Employer	7
Brochure from TeamStudy, Inc.	8
Letter of Appreciation from TeamStudy Customer	9
Certificate of Psi Chi Membership	10
Academic and Professional References	11

---

**PORTFOLIO EXAMPLE #2 - Example for a Public Policy major****INTRODUCTION**

Public Policy is not only my career goal, but a dream of mine since high school. While attending XX College for my Associates of Science in Administration of Justice, I have earned many certificates and awards. This portfolio illustrates my people skills and communication skills in the form of volunteer work and my ability to improve the lives of others. I am committed at all levels, evidenced by my work in a national professional organization.

I have overcome many obstacles, and can motivate others by example. I have a great understanding of public policies and highly anticipate contributing to society through my knowledge base and ambition.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Professional Commitment</b> <i>Certificate of Completion, Tri-Omega</i>	2
<b>Outstanding Qualities</b> <i>Personal Reference from an Immediate Supervisor</i>	3
<b>Hard Work Pays Off</b> <i>Letter of Congratulations for Winning a Scholarship</i>	4
<b>Academically Successful</b> <i>Certification of Participation, PP program</i>	5
<b>Role Model</b> <i>Certificate of Appreciation, High School Outreach and Recruitment</i>	6
<b>Public Relations Techniques</b> <i>Certificates of Achievement, Three Public Policy Certificates</i>	7
<b>Tested and Proven</b> <i>Notice of Examination Results for D.C. Public Policy Department</i>	8