

## **GUIDELINES FOR PORTFOLIO PREPARATION LIFE EXPERIENCE CREDIT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

These guidelines will assist you as you prepare your portfolio. Here are a few important points:

1. The portfolio demonstrates to the evaluating professor that you already have the knowledge and skills to meet course outcomes.
2. Before developing your portfolio, it is usually advisable to talk with the department chair or faculty members who teach the relevant course(s) to discuss whether or not your experience might qualify you for credit. Ask for a copy of the course syllabus/outline and/or course objectives in the department office, so that you can compare your experience to them. Use similar vocabulary in your portfolio, and where possible, follow the course outline in describing your experience.
3. Organize your portfolio. Make it easy for the evaluator to see and understand how your experience qualifies you to receive credit for the particular course(s) for which you are applying. It should be neatly arranged and presented in a notebook or binder.
4. Your portfolio will be reviewed and evaluated by a University faculty member, so 'best quality' is essential. The writing and appearance of the portfolio should be professional. Double check spelling and grammar. If the quality is below acceptable standards, it will be returned to you before being sent on for evaluation.
5. If you duplicate documents, make clear copies.
6. Include all materials from persons or agencies you mention in the portfolio. Limit supporting documents to only those that are directly relevant to your experience. The inclusion of marginally relevant documents may imply to the reviewing faculty member that much of your experience is not applicable to the course(s).
7. If you are applying for credit in more than one academic department, submit separate portfolios for each. This allows the review cycle to be completed more quickly.

## PORTFOLIO FORMAT

### 1. Table of Contents

Number each page and list page contents.

### 2. Certification

Include a statement in the portfolio indicating that all material presented is accurate and true, to the best of your knowledge (see appendix).

### 3. Areas to be Evaluated

List the courses – by name and course number – for which you are applying for credit.

### 4. The Resume

Since the person who evaluates your portfolio may not know you, the resume presents your goals and achievements. It should include your name, address and student I.D. number.

Include formal education. Provide names, dates and places where you attended post-secondary schools or technical programs. Include names and dates of any diplomas or certificates earned. You may wish to identify your accomplishments more clearly in narrative form. If you have received any awards, tell about them.

List the jobs, informal training, and/or self-learning experiences, which apply to the courses you wish to have evaluated. Give the dates, places and duration of the experiences. Keep them separate to make it easy for the evaluator to follow your presentation. Some experiences may appear in more than one portfolio.

### 5. Knowledge and Skills - Learning or Competencies

This narrative expands upon the resume. It should describe *in great detail* the experiences, which have prepared you to apply for credit. Describe the knowledge and skills gained through the experience, how you acquired them and how you use this knowledge. How do they relate to the course objectives. This is your opportunity to “prove” to the evaluator that you have achieved the outcomes expected of someone who would take the course.

If the knowledge was gained through prior learning from workshops, seminars, etc., then list how long the training sessions lasted and exactly what you accomplished.

The skills may be either manual, such as “operating equipment,” or intellectual, such as “assessing a learning disability.” You may wish to list competencies, such as: *I can audit the accounts of a city or a business. I can conduct a job interview. I can design and build a stage set, or I can prepare slides for tissue analysis.*

The needed detail varies with each individual and each situation. It is up to you to demonstrate your competencies and expertise in the selected course field(s). The following questions may help you:

- How am I better trained than those who have not had these experiences?
- What special materials and instruments can I use?
- How has my knowledge in these areas helped me in other areas?
- What relationships can I see between areas of endeavor that I did not see before?
- What organizational patterns are apparent to me?
- What new ideas did my experience help me to gain?

## 6. Documentation of Learning

The final section of your portfolio contains testimony that verifies your experience and learning. Documentation of your expertise is important to the reviewer. Meeting with the department chair or faculty who will evaluate your portfolio might assist you as you prepare your final document. Secure the best documentation possible, such as:

- a. Transcripts of course records, programs from schools, job training programs or military service schools. Specify if the training was approved by any organization or certifying body, such as the American Council on Education, a professional organization, a government body, or a union.
- b. Copies of continuing education certificates or certificates of attendance at relevant workshops, seminars, institutes or training programs. Again, specify if the training was approved and by whom.
- c. Copies of newspaper articles, special awards, or samples of your work.
- d. Photographs/video of your work, as appropriate.
- e. Letters of testimony pertinent to the course from supervisors, administrators or others competent to judge your work.

Letters can be used to corroborate your experience, and they are usually the most common form of documentation. Consider the following when obtaining letters:

- The individual writing the letter must know you and have first-hand knowledge of your experience as you present it in the portfolio.
- The letter should clearly state the nature of the relationship between you and the writer.
- The letter should be written on official stationery.
- The letter should focus on the duties, responsibilities, tasks and activities inherent in the experience under consideration.
- The author should describe the activity in much the same fashion as the material you include in the portfolio, that is, it should set down the context of the experience.
- A special accomplishment, something that results in a new product, for example, requires documentation by persons who actually observed you as you developed the product.
- When requesting letters, make clear that they are for verification, rather than for recommendation.

*Appendix*

**Certification**

I certify that all materials presented in this portfolio are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date