Building a Career Portfolio

What is a Career Portfolio?

A Career Portfolio is an organized collection of evidence that shows your accomplishments both in and out of school. A portfolio contains samples of your work that exhibit and reveal the quality and variety of your learning, your accomplishments, your skills, and your experiences.
The purpose of your career portfolio is to support a resume when applying for employment. A portfolio can be a personal marketing tool. It can be used to "sell" yourself to others. Portfolio's are also used "beyond the classroom". (E.g., an artist to sell their paintings, a model or an actor to get a job, or an architect or contractor bidding on a job).

Is a Portfolio the same as a Resume?

A portfolio differs from a resume in the following key ways:

- A resume is usually only 1-3 pages in length and is meant to *summarize* your accomplishments.
  A portfolio most often contains many pages and is meant to *show evidence* of a wide variety of your accomplishments.
- A resume *tells* and employer what you have accomplished, a portfolio shows an employer what you have accomplished.

What are the steps to Developing a Career Portfolio?

A. Gather Your Evidence
Collect your credentials (information and records that show your interests, involvements, and achievements.

B. Organize Your Portfolio
Arrange your evidence into sections that will help someone else see what you have accomplished.

C. Assemble Your Portfolio
Format and compile your portfolio so it is easy for someone else to read and understand the information you have gathered.

D. A Final Check
You have much to be proud of in your portfolio. Check that it has updated information and that it shows your work in the best possible light.

A.   Gather Your Evidence

What evidence can be placed in a portfolio?
Evidence comes in many forms. You can include evidence of your skills, your talents, your achievements, your awards, your experiences, as well as your learning and employability skills. Be sure to include things you do both in school and away from school.

Items for Your Portfolio

Items can include:
✓ report cards
✓ things you are proud of (newspaper clippings, certificates, awards, badges, etc.)
✓ certificate of participation (clubs, events, etc.)
✓ a record of your community involvement activities
✓ an updated resume
✓ hobbies

B.   Organize Your Portfolio

Consider each of the following four categories to help you organize your evidence (collect your credentials).

1.   Educational Accomplishments

In this section, concentrate on what you have accomplished in your studies at school.

Items to include:
✓ your latest report card showing your grades, and your learning skills
✓ your up-to-date transcript (your academic record to date)
✓ any academic awards you have received,
✓ special skills (e.g., knowledge of software, knowledge of another language, musical ability)
✓ any other evidence unique to you and your education

2.   School Activities

This section should contain evidence of your involvement in school activities. School activities might include clubs, sports teams, bands, and other activities specific to your school.

Items to include:
✓ newspaper articles
✓ sports awards
✓ a program from a school play
✓ a letter from your coach
✓ a program from a sporting event
✓ physical fitness
✓ any other evidence unique to your involvement in school activities

3. Work

This section focusses on your work experiences. Be sure to include both paying and non-paying work experiences.

Items to include:
✓ an updated resume
✓ a list of references
✓ Co-operative education certificates
✓ cover letter
✓ participation in household responsibilities
✓ any letters of recommendation you have received highlighting your work skills (include employers, neighbours, friends, teachers, etc.)

4. Community Participation

This last section should focus on your participation in community activities. Many scholarships and awards require evidence of your community involvement.
Consider your involvement in:

- swimming lessons
- music lessons
- drivers education courses
- First Aid/CPR courses
- cultural clubs/organizations
- religious groups
- fund-raising events
- other activities specific to your community

Items to include:
✓ your completed "Record of Community Involvement Activities"
✓ a written summary of your experiences, e.g., a written story
✓ personal references
✓ photos
✓ any other evidence unique to your participation in community activities

Collect Your Credentials

Name:_____

Consider each of the following four categories to help you organize your evidence for your portfolio.

1.   **Educational Accomplishments** - In this section, concentrate on what you have accomplished in your studies at school.

Items to Include:	**My Credentials**
✓ your latest report card showing your grades, and your learning skills ✓ your up-to-date transcript (your academic record to date) ✓ any academic awards you have received, ✓ special skills (e.g., knowledge of software, knowledge of another language, musical ability) ✓ any other evidence unique to you and your education	

2.   **School Activities** - This section should contain evidence of your involvement in school activities. School activities might include clubs, sports teams, bands, and other activities specific to your school.

Items to include:	**My Credentials**
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Items to include:	**My Credentials**
• swimming lessons • music lessons • drivers education courses • First Aid/CPR courses • cultural clubs/organizations • religious groups • fund-raising events • other activities specific to your community ✓ your completed "Record of Community Involvement Activities" ✓ a written summary of your experiences, e.g., a written story ✓ personal references ✓ photos ✓ any other evidence unique to your participation in community activities	

C.   Assemble Your Portfolio

After you have selected and organized your evidence, it is time to format and compile your portfolio so it is easy for someone else to read and understand the information you have gathered.

Tips for assembling your portfolio:

Does my portfolio show a wide-range of my accomplishments?
The strength of a portfolio is in the variety of what you show. Examples you include should show many of your accomplishments rather than many examples of one accomplishment.

Do I have a title page for my portfolio?
This page should include
✓ your name
✓ a title for your portfolio
✓ photo's or words that describe you

Do I have a table of contents for my portfolio?
A table of contents provides the reader with a guide to the sections and information you included in your portfolio. Numbering your portfolio pages, using dividers, or colour coding the sections will help you to organize your table of contents.

D.   A Final Check

As you learn to develop new skills, your Career Portfolio needs to be kept up-to-date. You will frequently update your portfolio by discarding outdated evidence and inserting new and better evidence as it is accumulated.

A Final Checklist:

✓ Does your portfolio have the best examples of what you have accomplished?
✓ Are the examples concise and to-the-point?
✓ Have you edited your portfolio for clarity and for spelling and grammar?
✓ Is the sequence and organization of your portfolio logical?
✓ Does the format of your portfolio make it appealing and easy to read?
✓ Does the organization and presentation of your portfolio demonstrate that you would be an excellent person for an employer to hire?

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