

The ePortfolio Option

USF School of Information Masters of Arts in Library and Information Science

Introduction to USF LIS ePortfolios

These guidelines and resources are being made available to you as a graduate student in the USF School of Information's Masters in Library and Information Science program, to your faculty advisor, and to administration to assist in the development of procedures and requirements for an ePortfolio final assessment. At this time students may choose between the traditionally offered Comprehensive Exam or the development of an ePortfolio as part of the final program requirements toward earning the Masters of Arts in Library and Information Science. Included is introductory information about ePortfolios, resources, examples, a look at how employers use them, and opportunities for input about the development process. It is based on academic and anecdotal evidence found through publications and reports, feedback from constituents (students, faculty, administration, advisory council members, and employers during the development stages. If you have any questions about the ePortfolio or the process, please contact Diane Austin at dianeaustrin@usf.edu.

Why ePortfolio?

An ePortfolio is an increasingly used student assessment in graduate programs, especially in professional programs such as library and information science. It allows the student to choose artifacts which exhibit their competencies as defined by the program's stated learning outcomes. The student collects artifacts and evidence of their experiences throughout their program of study and then creates an exhibit of their collected work and experiences which best shows their knowledge, skills, and qualities as the consummate information professional according to the program's defined areas. The ePortfolio, once reviewed and accepted, represents a culminating experience of their professional preparation through their graduate study.

In addition to the artifacts and evidence of co-curricular experiences, the student supports the collection through a self-reflective narrative. This narrative provides the student with the opportunity to think about and describe how they meet the competencies defined by the program's learning outcomes.

Reflective practice complements the artifacts by allowing the student to think about their learning, beliefs, values, professional contributions, and plans for continuation of lifelong learning. The combination of ePortfolio development and reflection can enhance the student's overall learning experience (Zubizaretta, 2009). The act of reflecting while gathering, reviewing, organizing, and creating the ePortfolio produces an independent, self-directed, and student centered approach to learning. The requirements of creating a technology based portfolio helps for better preparation for the challenges of the field and skills required by employers.

The use of ePortfolios:

As 21st century learners and knowledge workers, the focus on hiring for abilities and competencies, along with credentials, becomes more important and makes the job market more competitive. Employers are not only seeking a credentialed librarian with an accredited LIS master's degree, but expecting experience, personal qualities, professionalism, and skills (especially technology literacy and abilities) to the competitive mix.

Your graduate education should not only be designed to provide foundational knowledge of the field, but allow for development and recognition of competencies that lead to your hiring as a professional contributor to the field. Young and Morris (2007) recognize the role of continuously developing *knowledge workers* as "educated professionals with knowledge and expertise, dealing with the creation and communication of information".

The goal of the ePortfolio: Showing what you have accomplished, how it relates to what is expected of the library and/or knowledge professional, and reflecting on what you know, what they you learned, and how you can continue to develop, and then contribute that to society.

USF SI Guidelines for ePortfolio

Undergraduate students in the School of Information Science (SI) who are entering their final year have the option to take the Comprehensive Exam or create an ePortfolio. During this process students choosing the ePortfolio will receive mentoring and guidance to facilitate completion of ePortfolios in a timely manner through an ePortfolio work-group. The work-group will provide resources and support to participants.

In the early stages of implementation of the ePortfolio, the student is required to meet once with a faculty ePortfolio advisor prior to submitting the first iteration of the portfolio assessment (for fall 2015 - Diane Austin and Kathleen McCook; for spring 2016 -). After submission, the student will meet again with a faculty ePortfolio advisor for confirmation of completion of the requirements or feedback for modifications to enhance the portfolio to meet requirements. Starting spring of 2016 the student will also submit their ePortfolio to their advisor for feedback according to SI guidelines.

The model for the USF School of Information Masters in Library and Information Science program is in its final stages of development. That is why you as the student can make impact in helping determine the

final design, rubric, format, and mechanisms to best present your work while meeting the assessment needs of the program. If you have any questions along the way, please contact the SI ePortfolio process coordinator.

Important Choices: Your Time and Resource Commitment

Ideally, the time commitment, resource review, and planning and creation of the ePortfolio begins from the student's first semester in the LIS program. An introduction to the ePortfolio is provided in the LIS 5020 Foundations of LIS course. The student is encouraged to identify and organize artifacts in a continuous process until the final drafting, review and submission of the ePortfolio. As we transition to the requirements, students have the option to complete either the Comprehensive Exam or the ePortfolio.

The Comprehensive Exam occurs during the student's last semester (or graduation semester) of coursework. It is comprised of a written exam conducted during a specified one week period on a choice of questions. It is assessed as pass/fail based on a grading rubric for the exam. It is expected that students will write and cite well, follow copyright guidelines, and produce a high quality, representative example of their work and understanding of the core outcomes of the LIS program.

The ePortfolio allows for more freedom and flexibility in its preparation and presentation, as it reflects the unique qualities of the individual while also addressing the program's core outcomes. It is expected that the preparation of the ePortfolio will take at least, if not more than, 40 of creation time if the "artifacts" are already completed (evidence from courses already completed). The reflection will require and the creation of the electronic collection (in a web, blog, or other form) will be dependent on the student's current level of technological skills and options chosen. It is anticipated and expected that students will be taking coursework or working independently to enhance their web, media and electronic skills to prepare a portfolio meeting the professionally acceptable guidelines for the program and for job searching/employers.

Suggested Readings for Preparation:

Some of you may have already reviewed or read these as part of another course in the program. If you have not, make sure to read them before getting started.

Ten Steps to Producing a Digital Portfolio:

<http://dianeaustin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/10steps.pdf>

Researching Electronic Portfolios and Learner Engagement: The Reflect Initiative

<http://dianeaustin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/barrett.pdf>

Learning Assessment: The Application of ePortfolios

<http://dianeaustin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/curtis.pdf>

Self-discovery through digital portfolios: a holistic approach to developing new library and information professionals

<http://dianeaustin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/hallam.pdf>

The evolution of ePortfolios for school library education: A case study

<http://dianeaustin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/jones.pdf>

Graduate student perceptions of ePortfolios: Uses for reflection, development, and assessment
<http://dianeastin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/wakimoto.pdf>

ePortfolios: Building for Your Future (PPT Presentation)
<http://dianeastin.myweb.usf.edu/eportfolio/readings/ePortfolioPresentation.pptx>

What's next?

We put a call out to students through the Canvas organization who are interested in exploring the ePortfolio option. After reviewing this resource page, the student confirms acceptance of this option. Graduating students must be on either the Comprehensive Exam OR the ePortfolio participants list. Once the Comprehensive Exam has begun, you will no longer have that option. You will then need to complete the ePortfolio or wait until the next time the exam is offered to take it to graduate. You cannot graduate without successfully completing one of the assessment options.

Confirm you're on the ePortfolio list by replying to the email you received with the link to this page

Attend an online session or watch/listen to a recorded overview of ePortfolio

Review background readings (above) to give you a better understanding of professional portfolios and some context for your ePortfolio.

Contact and "meet" with a ePortfolio coordinator. Make sure you fully understand the expectations of the ePortfolio requirements and are prepared to complete it in the semester you are graduating. Contact Diane Austin at dianeastin@usf.edu for a virtual or face-to-face appointment before October 1 benchmark.

Plan your portfolio: submit a simple plan for completing the ePortfolio by benchmark 1.

Be aware of deadlines. For spring 2016, a timeline of Feb 1, Mar 1, and Apr 1 has been established as benchmarks to help keep you on track. If you miss any of these deadlines, you may not be able to complete the requirements this semester.

Benchmark 1 – Provide a written plan to the faculty advisors on what you need to do to complete the requirement

Benchmark 2 – Submit a well-organized, well-designed, well-constructed, and well written draft of your portfolio for review

Benchmark 3 – if you are asked to make any changes to your portfolio, the final version is due no later than April 1st to ensure graduation in spring 2016.

Ask questions. If you have any questions about the ePortfolio or the process, please contact Diane Austin at dianeastin@usf.edu.

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