

# PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIOS

*Portfolios can help you market yourself to employers by providing a visual representation of your education, experiences and skills. Contact the Career Center for assistance in creating your portfolio.*

## How do I start organizing a portfolio?

- Keep in mind that portfolios are *optional* – it is up to you to decide if creating a portfolio will be an effective tool in your job search.
- Decide which of your skills and experiences relate to the needs of the employer, and gather materials that will exhibit those skills and experiences.
- Buy a 3-ring binder and a supply of plastic page covers to present your materials in a professional manner.
- You may want to label different sections for ease of finding information in the portfolio.
- Keep similar information together (e.g., put all the recommendation letters in one section).

## How do I share my portfolio with a potential employer?

- Always bring your portfolio with you to interviews.
- When an employer asks questions about your experiences, use your portfolio to support your responses.
  - For example, the employer might say, “I see that you worked at your school newspaper. What were your favorite writing assignments?” Your response might be, “My favorite assignments included this health article (show article in portfolio) that required a lot of research and this creative writing piece (show article).”
- You may not have the opportunity to show your portfolio in an interview. However, you can offer to send copies of the materials to the employer as a follow-up to the interview.
  - You can also offer to leave the portfolio for the employer to review at his or her convenience. If you choose to do this, determine with the employer a day when you can stop by to pick up your portfolio. Be sure to have back-up copies of the materials in case the portfolio is misplaced.
- Putting together an online portfolio is another option, which employers can access anytime. Optimal Resume (<https://calvin.optimalresume.com/>) provides tools to help you build an online portfolio.

### *Portfolio Contents*

*Consider including the items listed below in your portfolio:*

- Copy of your resume
- Copy of your transcript
- List of experiences that you were unable to fit in your resume (i.e., summer jobs, volunteer experiences, co-curricular activities)
- Certificates, awards or honors
- Certifications for special trainings
- A program from an event you planned or in which you participated
- Samples of relevant papers or projects
- Letters of nomination to honors or academic organizations
- Recommendation letters
- Articles that feature some of your achievements
- Internship evaluations, summary reports or projects

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## Tips for Education Majors

- If you are seeking a teaching position, you may want to add the following items:
  - Student teaching evaluations
  - Sample lesson plans, syllabi or other teaching tools you have created
  - Pictures of bulletin boards you designed or student projects (with the students' permission)
  - Information about a field trip or other events you organized
  - Pictures of you working with students