**What is a Professional Portfolio and why do I need it?**

# **What is a Professional Portfolio?**

It is a collection of artifacts showcasing your qualifications, skills, and experience. It is a targeted resource so the audience you are making it available to needs to be considered. It can be used as a marketing tool and provide additional insight into your capabilities by providing evidence to back up claims of skills and accomplishments.

# **What is an Archive?**

It is a collection of ALL your artifacts, including your academic and professional documentation. This could be considered the Master Portfolio as it is a place to pull from to create a targeted portfolio when applying for jobs, requesting funding, or asking for that promotion. It can be hardcopy or electronic but needs to be accessible for when you pull it.

# **Portfolio vs. Archive?**

It is very useful to create an archive first and use it as an ever-evolving resource. A portfolio itself is a directed resource that has an audience. Using the mass of information within your archive can be an effective and efficient way to create a targeted portfolio much like a resume or cover letter is targeted.

# **Why should I have one?**

Having a portfolio is an effective way to apply for jobs, to apply to college or training programs, and can be used to justify a raise or promotion. As mentioned, your resume provides a high-level view of who you are and what you bring, but a portfolio can go in-depth, cover more information, and keep track of your personal and professional development. All your jobs and projects can be monitored and displayed, including things that might not make it to your resume, but still are pertinent to your career aspirations. It is also useful in creating job specific resumes and cover letters. As most of the information within in the portfolio is developed, it can be quickly pulled and tailored to a job description.

# **Two distinct types:**

* Traditional: This is a hardcopy version, typically in a binder or folder.
* Digital: A virtual portfolio and can be accessed online.

# **Typical Table of Contents**

* CV/Resume
* Education, Qualifications, and Training
* Employment/Work History
* Volunteering/Community Involvement
* References/Recommendations

# **Step by step**

1. Decide on format (Traditional vs. Digital) and how it will be displayed
   1. Binder or Folder, or e-portfolio or other
2. Identify Archive vs. Portfolio
3. Identify you audience
   1. Employer, potential employer, college, professional organization, client, etc.
4. Determine sections you will include
5. Provide table of contents
6. Consolidate evidence materials (Degrees, certificates, awards, projects showcases, letters, photos)

# **Degrees, Certificates, and Diplomas**

* + Include originals or copies along with course outlines, learning outcomes, and transcripts of academic record/results
  + Academic achievement awards and any college or university related achievement

# **Professional Development**

* + Professional development activities, courses, especially those with a certificate
  + Conferences, seminars and other events. Include a flyer, program sheet or outline
  + Also include activities done on path toward achievement (i.e., classes taken for study for PE, etc.)

# **Employment/Work History**

* + Similar sections such as seen in Resume, but with many more bullet points getting into everything you did.
  + Performance reviews, recommendations for promotion,
  + Samples of work (i.e., graphics if you are going into graphic design, marketing sheets you have created, etc.) Make sure you can use them and aren't considered company sensitive
  + Accolades received for your work
  + Photos, business cards, staff profiles, and media relating to you career path. Can show your promotions, job title changes, etc.

# **References**

* + Any written references or letters of recommendation you have from past employers, supervisors, or colleagues.
  + Recommendations from LinkedIn can be included
  + Testimonials from past or present customers or clients