Handbook to Building Your SCI ePortfolio

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Overview

Purpose and objective of your SCI ePortfolio
An “eportfolio” is literally a digital collection of work demonstrating your learning, skills, and competencies. The key objective of your SCI ePortfolio will be to demonstrate from examples of

1. Many thanks to the ePortfolio Initiative, LaGuardia Community College for permission to incorporate and take inspiration from their ePortfolio guide.
your academic and co-curricular work that you have mastered the Scholar-Citizen learning outcomes and that you embody the qualities of a Scholar-Citizen.

**Kinds of ePortfolios**

There are three kinds of ePortfolios you might here about: academic, career, and integrative. Your SCI ePortfolio will begin as an **academic portfolio** and then during your final semester you will transition it into a **career portfolio**.

Academic portfolios document student progress toward competency in specific academic/knowledge/skill areas and accurate self-assessment. They are designed to help students become curators of their own work and, through that process, to reflect on the relevance and meaningfulness of their learning experiences. These types of portfolios feature strong reflective components where the student:

- Describes and evaluates the meaningfulness and relevance of specific learning experiences to the student’s personal and academic growth or development;
- Demonstrates the ability to self-assess by questioning his or her own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions, and in the end is able to formulate new ways of thinking as a result of that self-critiquing process;
- Analyzes how specific learning experiences contribute to the student’s learning of self, others, or academic content;
  - Demonstrates connections between the experience and materials from other courses, past experiences, and future career/academic goals.
  - Recognizes her innate and emerging strengths, and
  - Looks forward to and plans future steps in her progress.

By contrast, a career portfolio showcases a student’s best work as a means of demonstrating to a prospective employer her expertise, qualifications, and skills in a particular area. Artists, architects, designers, and journalists are examples of professionals who create portfolios of their work to share with prospective clients, employers, and graduate schools.

As the designer or writer of your ePortfolio, you will periodically take your “reader” (the SCI Director, your faculty advisor, or possibly a prospective client or employer) through the portfolio, explaining the context of the work you have documented, what each piece exemplifies, and how, when taken together, the ePortfolio demonstrates the skills and qualities needed for continuation in the program.

**The ePortfolio mantra: collect, select, reflect**

While you are developing your SCI ePortfolio, you should document your growth each semester, including things that have challenged you and those that have affirmed your skills or talents. As an extensive and specialized kind of personal archive, your ePortfolio will feature examples of your work (called “artifacts” in ePortfolio speak) that demonstrate or exemplify your progress and accomplishments toward a specific goals or set of goals. Think of it as a public window for showcasing your personal achievement. In the case of a SCI portfolio, you are tracing your development in terms of five specific learning outcomes as well as in terms of your personal and professional growth. You’ll be looking at your ability to navigate problem solving with people who hold different values, ideas, and assumptions from your own; your ability to work in groups;
your leadership skills; and changes in your understanding and mastery of academic skill and knowledge associated with your specific major.

You will be adding to this digital portfolio while you are in the Scholar-Citizen program—creating a collection of exemplary works—and then providing reflections explaining what is notable about the pieces in the collection and how they all tie together to show a picture of you. Some of the goals of your SCI ePortfolio will be pre-defined for you as criteria for graduation as a Scholar-Citizen. Other goals will be determined and set by you.

The kinds of artifacts you include is entirely up to you. Everything from Powerpoints to Pinterest boards to Wikis to twitter feeds have been used in ePortfolios. This is YOUR space, and you can include whatever you wish. It is also your private space—it’s entirely up to you what you share and when.

Artifacts and telling your story
The process of putting together an ePortfolio collection of artifacts can be highly individualized, and students typically have several ePortfolio “presentations,” each of them targeted to a specific audience and created with a specific purpose in mind.

For example, let’s say you have an ePortfolio presentation assigned by your Sociology professor as the final project for the class. The Professor has said that the final presentation should contain examples of your skills as a field researcher including:

- a literature review, drafts of interview questions,
- transcriptions of interviews,
- a filmed example of your work with interview subjects,
- a written assessment of your work by the site coordinator where you conducted your interviews, and
- drafts of your final community report.

Let’s also imagine that you have been building an ePortfolio presentation for the internship you want to win, another as part of your application to graduate school, and yet another for prospective employers. The purposes of each ePortfolio presentation will be different, but your Sociology collection of works might appear in each of these other presentations because it shows:

- your Sociology professor that you have mastered the learning outcomes associated with the assignment,
- prospective internship coordinators that you have the professional skills and academic knowledge necessary to be a productive and enjoyable intern to work with,
- graduate admittance committees that you are well-prepared for advanced work in the field and will be a credit to the institution’s graduate program, and
- prospective employers that you have good time-management skills, are deadline oriented, can apply your disciplinary knowledge to solve complex problems, and are a diligent worker.
Reflection
A reflection is a commentary on your development and explanations for why specific artifacts are included. In some situations, professors will provide prompts intended to guide your evaluation of your work. In other cases, you will need to find your own path and raise your own questions.

When Your ePortfolio is Public
Any writing or work that leaves your hands and your control should be considered public, that is, it is available for a public reader to assess, evaluate, appreciate and judge.

ePortfolios are by their nature intended to be shared publicly at some point. For this reason, before sharing your portfolio or making it publicly accessible, please think carefully about the message you are sending with the inclusion of each artifact. Spelling errors and sloppy presentation communicate messages about who you are and what you care about. They should be avoided at all cost unless you are making some sort of argument about how much your spelling and presentation have improved … In that case, it would make sense to include pieces from different parts of your academic career.

Required Content of a SCI ePortfolio
SCI ePortfolios share several common elements that are described below. In addition to having these parts, a strong Scholar-Citizen ePortfolio documents your learning in terms of the Scholar-Citizen Learning Outcomes. As you approach your senior year and the ePortfolio defense process, it is critical that you download and reference a copy of the SCI ePortfolio Overview handout to guide your selection of artifacts.

Common eP pages and suggested writing prompts
1. **Welcome:** This is the first page viewers see when they open your ePortfolio. It should welcome the viewer and tell them what they will find inside. Remember that you are writing for an audience, so you want to consider who you think will be viewing your ePortfolio and what they need to know. Think of this page as a roadmap to your ePortfolio, highlighting the important stops along the route. You might also think of this as a table of contents, as in a book, indicating what is in each chapter.

   Be sure to include on this page your name and your major at RU and your status as a Scholar-Citizen. Other items you might put on this page include:

   - One or more images. You could insert a photograph or some other image(s) that would welcome viewers. You could also insert a video here and/or elsewhere in the ePortfolio. Here and everywhere, please be sure to choose images and other media carefully, so that they say something important to your viewer about who you are and who you want to be. (If you choose an image that is not your own, please make sure you provide a citation for it. If you use original photography, please let us know that as well!)
   - A favorite quotation. You could insert a quotation that you like, one that says something important to you. Explain: What does it mean to you? Why is it important? Be sure to
include who said or wrote it, and where it comes from.

- A work matrix or menu connecting examples of works to specific SCI learning outcomes and requirements.

Overall, as you develop this section, you might think of ways to highlight what makes your ePortfolio particularly interesting, and encourage viewers to explore further. Keep in mind the question, “Why would someone want to see what’s in my ePortfolio?”

2. **About Me Page:** You can use this section to tell your viewers something about who you are. On this page, you might want to write a few paragraphs about some or all of these topics (there’s some overlap here and you should not consider this an exhaustive list of ideas):

- Who are you? Take time to introduce yourself more fully by providing information such as where you are from, your family background, or other details that help the reader see you in a more complete way.
- What are your interests and hobbies?
- What makes you special?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Where are you from? Talk about the neighborhood or country that you grew up in. What was it like? How did it help shape you into the kind of person you are today?

Please be aware that if you publish your ePortfolio to the web, this information will be available to anyone. Do not include private information like your full birthday, your home address, or your phone number (You might, however, want to provide more general information, like “I live in Dublin, Virginia”). Also remember that you always have the option to make your ePortfolio private, visible only to you and your instructors.

3. **Inspirations Page:** Who or what inspires you? You can use this page to share things or people who have shaped you. Here are some possibilities you could write about and illustrate:

- Who inspires you? Identify people from your life or studies that you admire or who have influenced your own thinking. Why are they important? What is it about them that inspires you? What have you learned from them? How have they shaped your life? **Go beyond the personal to explore intellectual and professional influences.** A shout out to mom is incredibly powerful, but it may not be relevant to this presentation of you and your work. If you were interviewing for a dream opportunity, whose work or ideas would you reference in order to demonstrate that you are the right person for this opportunity or to prove that you are the person others want to work with?
- Is there a book, a poem, a song, a film, or a piece of art that has influenced you? A particular societal event or personal experience? How did it change your way of thinking?
- If the person (or book, film, etc.) has a web presence (a website, an ePortfolio, etc.), you might also provide a link here.

4. **My Radford University Journey:** On this page you’ll trace your experiences at Radford and in the Scholar-Citizen program as well as your plans for the future. Artifacts you include in this section should help you answer questions such as:
• Why did you decide to attend RU?
• Why did you decide to join the Scholar-Citizen program?
• What do you feel are the biggest challenges about going to college?
• What strengths do you have that will help you to be successful?
• What kind of skills do you need to develop to help you become successful as a student, as a professional, or as a community member?
• How do each of these artifacts say something about your development?

5. **Education or Career Goals Page:** While there may be some overlap with the prior section, you should use this section to focus, not on where you’ve been or even where you are, but on where you’re heading. Start this page with a summary:
• What do you hope to accomplish in your life?
• What is your major and how does it connect to what you hope to accomplish?
• What motivated you to choose this major?
• Where do you see yourself in a year, in five years?

In some manner, address the following questions in separate paragraphs/reflections or even separate sections of the page:
• Career Goals: What career do you plan to pursue and why? What are your interests? How do your interests relate to your chosen career? What are the special abilities, skills and talents you possess? How do your skills relate to your chosen career?
• Educational Goals: What are your educational goals? Why did you choose those goals?
• Steps Along the Way: What is your specific plan to achieving your educational goals? Are there key steps you need to take along the way (a particular class, a certification, a skill you need to learn)? What are your strategies? List some of the sacrifices you may need to take in order to achieve your future goals.
• Advanced Education: Are you planning to continue your education after Radford? What graduate program are you interested in? Why? What do you know about this program that makes it attractive? What are the most important requirements for this graduate program? What skills will you need to develop in order to succeed there?

6. **Achievements:** This section of your ePortfolio focuses on what you’re doing and learning. On this page, create a Classes and Projects Table connecting your SCI classes and co-curriculars to Scholar-Citizen learning outcomes. For each class that appears in this matrix, create a paragraph that explains the significance of the specific artifacts you have selected. For a good example of this, check out the ePortfolio of Emily Guise who used a Work Matrix with live links: [http://emilyguise.weebly.com/sci-work-matrix.html](http://emilyguise.weebly.com/sci-work-matrix.html). Make sure that you consult the ePortfolio Overview handout that explains how many examples you need.

Together, these pages are like a digital filing cabinet that provides important details about your learning that go beyond the course title and the name of the instructor. As you build these pages, remember that each course page can include:
• The official course description from the RU Catalog or official description of the project
• A reflection on the course. This could be a description of the course in your own words. What was the most interesting part of it? What was the hardest part? What was the most
important thing you learned?

- One or two pieces of work you did in this course (papers, presentations, artwork, webpages, etc.) that connect to the learning outcomes identified for the course on the matrix
- For each piece of work, please include a short reflection on what you learned. You might discuss the challenges you encountered, how you overcame those challenges, and what you might do differently if you were to do the assignment again. You might also explain how the assignment fits within the larger picture of your education at RU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes and Projects Table</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class/Course Project/Service Project Description</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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Your professors might give you additional ideas about the kinds of reflections they want you to write for a particular course or assignment.

7. **Beyond the Classroom -- Campus and Community:** This section should detail the things you do outside of the classroom that contribute to the mosaic of who you are as a person. You might choose to write about your involvement in student clubs or activities on campus, community life, church, volunteer work, etc. You can create a list of the groups you belong to and the activities that are important to you. Your viewer will get a better picture if you also provide at least a brief description of the group or activity, and what you learn or gain by being a part of it.

8. **A Resume:** If you do not want to include your work resume in your ePortfolio at any time, you can easily hide it from view. When it’s ready, your resume page should contain some or all of the following information:
   - Your contact information: First and Last Name and Email Address
   - Objective (optional): What do you want to do? If you include this section it should include a sentence or two about your employment goals. A customized objective that describes why you are the perfect candidate for the job can help your resume stand out from the competition.
   - Career Highlights / Qualifications (optional): A customized section of your resume that lists key achievements, skills, traits, and experience relevant to the position for which you are applying can serve dual purposes. It highlights your relevant experience and lets prospective employers know that you have taken the time to create a resume that shows how you are qualified for the job.
   - Experience: If you don’t have extensive work experience, put the Education section here instead. This section of your resume includes your work history. List the companies you
have worked for, dates of employment, the positions you held, and a bulleted list of responsibilities and achievements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company #1 City, State Dates Worked</th>
<th>Job Title Responsibilities / Achievements</th>
<th>Responsibilities / Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company #2 City, State Dates Worked</td>
<td>Job Title Responsibilities / Achievements</td>
<td>Responsibilities / Achievements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Education**: Move this section before the Experience section if you don’t have extensive work experience. In the education section of your resume, list the colleges you have attended, the dates and any degrees you have achieved, and any special awards and honors you have earned. College, Degree, Date Awards, Honors, Date

- **Skills**: Include skills related to the position/career field that you are applying for. For example: computer skills, language skills, etc.

- **References available upon request**: Just type the sentence. There is no need to include references on your resume. Rather, have a separate list of references ready to give to employers upon request.

9. **Connections Page**: Use this page to show how you and your learning are connected to other people, and to the broader world of resources and organizations, information and ideas. This page could have several parts:

- **My Favorite Projects**: Here you might include links to projects of other students that you admire. For each one, write 2-3 sentences explaining what you like about this project, and what you have learned about the person who created it.

- **My Groups and Organizations**: You will probably want to create a short annotated set of links to organizations and networks you belong to. Does your department or program have a website you can link to? What about professional associations? Student or community groups? For each link, please write 2-3 sentences explaining what this group or site means to you, and why it’s important.

- **My Resources**: You may also have other kinds of favorite websites that provide important information and help you learn. You can create a set of links to these sites. But again, remember, quality is more important than quantity. Be selective. Choose sites that really matter. For all sites, particularly in categories 2 and 3, create an annotation. An annotation is a brief description of the website that helps readers to see why it is important to you and possibly useful to them. Please follow the format below when you annotate a website:

  1. Name of site:
  2. Address (URL):
  3. Why do you visit this website? Why is it important?
  4. How does this website inform your thinking?
  5. What would you like people viewing your Links page to understand about this website? You may also want to create a thumbnail image for each link. As always, select your images carefully.