



How to Use a Portfolio to Prepare for a Job Interview

A portfolio can be used during a job interview to show important knowledge or skills you have that are relevant to the position or promotion you are applying for. Having a portfolio at an interview shows that you are well-organized and prepared. It can also help you stand out among other job candidates. A portfolio is different from a resume. A resume contains text-based descriptions of your education, work history, and training, while a portfolio enables you to demonstrate specific examples of the knowledge, skill, and experience you have acquired. By showcasing the certificates you have earned or pictures and charts that reflect your accomplishments, a portfolio makes your learning visible. As you prepare your portfolio, think about what you want your collection to represent. Make sure the examples you choose to include will highlight your best skill sets.

Paper vs. Electronic



Portfolios can be created in one of two formats - paper-based or electronic. In the past, portfolios were generally developed as a more traditional collection of paper-based documents usually compiled in a binder. This "hard copy" portfolio generally had a standard and fixed layout. Traditional paper portfolios can still be assembled with a professional appearance and provide a visual representation of your work. In this format, you should always use copies, not originals, and plan on leaving it with the potential employer at an interview. However, traditional portfolios do have a shelf life, and may be costly and time consuming to update on an ongoing basis.

As technology has progressed, electronic or ePortfolios have become more common. These are digital collections of your work in which you present specific samples of your achievements and qualifications via an online format. With an online portfolio, the URL address of the portfolio can also be included in your resume or cover letter so potential employers can view it before the interview. Having an ePortfolio also

relays to the employer that you are current with technology. An ePortfolio is also a very fluid document, allowing you to update, reproduce, and easily share it electronically with many people simultaneously. There is none of the hassle of copying and distributing hard copies. The ePortfolio can be read, reviewed, and assessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere. Thanks to smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc., an ePortfolio is always just a few clicks away.

If you're creating an online portfolio, present your qualifications and personal information in a functional, user-friendly, and well-organized manner. Consider including an "about me" page with information on your background and a PDF of your resume. Due to the highly public nature of your ePortfolio, you need not include your phone number and mailing address. An email will suffice for contact purposes. If you are creating a paper-base portfolio, print your work on high-quality paper and organize the document in a nice folder, binder, or leather portfolio case.

Regardless of the format of your portfolio, make sure it is easy for potential employers to navigate. Show off the work that you are most proud of and group similar items together. If background is required to better understand a design or project, add some text to explain it.

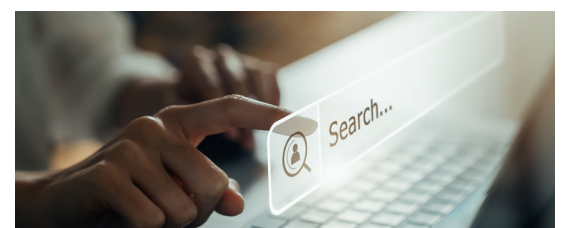
What to Include in Your Portfolio?

An effective portfolio is well organized and planned. It can contain the following types of documents:

- Resume (e.g., chronological, functional, combination)
- Training (e.g., NYS Administrative Assistant Traineeship)
- Transcripts of course work (e.g., vocational school, community college, university)
- Licenses or certificates (e.g., Applied Skills Trades Program, Customer Service Certificate Program)
- Professional affiliations (e.g., NYS Nurses Association)
- List of workforce competencies mastered (e.g., verbal and written skills, computer skills and technology, interpersonal and customer relations)
- Graphics, videos, or PowerPoints you have created
- Awards and letters of reference
- Community service (e.g., volunteer for youth sports, food pantry, senior center)

Where to Find ePortfolio Options

Most colleges and universities offer ePortfolio applications for their students as an educational tool to assist with their personal and professional growth. Some ePortfolios are also included within the curriculum. Ask your Student Services Office or Career Services Office to determine what your college provides. If that is not an option for you, [Squarespace](#), [Word Press](#), and [Weebly](#) offer free platforms to create unique websites that will serve as effective digital portfolios.



Maintain your Credentials

Once your portfolio is assembled be sure to check it regularly to make sure its content is accurate and current. Think of your portfolio as a work in progress - it is a living, breathing document that is ever-changing and growing along with your career.

A carefully constructed portfolio is a rare, win-win interview tool. It can provide a helpful edge in the job interview and gives the interviewer a much better understanding of what you can bring to their workplace.

