

MA WRD | Portfolio

Table of Contents

MA WRD Portfolio: An Overview	2
MA WRD: Learning Outcomes	5
Mid-Program Portfolio: An Overview	6
Mid-Program Portfolio: Assessment	9
Professional Portfolio: An Overview.....	10
Professional Portfolio: Assessment	13
Portfolio Planning Activity	14

MA WRD Portfolio: An Overview

What is the MA WRD portfolio requirement?

All students will keep a portfolio of significant work done for courses. This work will be curated and submitted as a portfolio at both the midpoint of the program and at its culminating point.

Mid-Program Portfolio

After completing the sixth course but before taking the ninth course, you must submit a portfolio to your advisor and meet with him/her to discuss both the portfolio and your future plans in the program. The Mid-Program Portfolio must be submitted, discussed with your advisor, and approved before the student can register for their ninth course in the program.

Professional Portfolio

In the final quarter of coursework, you must submit a Professional Portfolio and reflection essay. The Professional Portfolio faces outward, intended to situate your work within a professional field and to appeal to prospective employers or professional colleagues.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is an extension of your CV or résumé that accounts for your work and work processes by describing and explaining your academic or professional growth, including achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.

The premise of portfolios is that a single, written product does not tell a full story of what is learned in a single course or even an academic program. Much thinking, experimentation, and even (especially?) mistakes are part of learning, and the portfolio allows you to display and reflect on these important learning experiences. It gives you the opportunity to select examples of different kinds of writing and writing experiences, to articulate connections between those texts and experiences, to consider your development over time, and to provide context for the work you have done.

What are the genres of portfolio?

Here are three genres of a portfolio that you can use to frame your work:

- Working portfolio: includes completed work and progress toward a major project.

- Display portfolio: exhibits best work and achievements.
- Assessment portfolio: demonstrates competencies and skills for evaluation.

In addition to these three genres, there are other specific portfolio types:

- Student portfolio: reflects on the learning process and student growth
- Professional portfolio: highlights experience and abilities relevant to a professional field.
- Teaching portfolio: outlines teaching philosophy and showcases teaching experience.
- Capstone portfolio: a type of assessment portfolio for a particular program of study.

Although there are many more ways to categorize portfolios, the important takeaway is that the type of portfolio you are producing should have a **specific purpose** and should address an **authentic audience**.

What should you include?

What you include in your portfolio depends on your purpose, but almost all portfolios should include the following:

- An “About” page that summarizes your academic or professional interests and goals.
- Your CV or résumé.
- Work samples, typically 4–6 projects with deliverables that can be displayed and a description of the work you have done on those projects.
- Your contact information.

What makes a good work sample?

You should select your work samples to persuasively showcase the portfolio’s intended purpose for your authentic audience. Typically, a variety of work samples helps to show the full range of your achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills. “Real world” experience, such as internships, service-learning projects, and volunteer work, make compelling work samples because they may allow you to show how you responded to real challenges and contingencies, rather than responding to an assignment prompt.

A work sample is only as good as the way you contextualize it. One useful tool for framing your sample is the **S.T.A.R. Method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result). This framing method is designed to show how the sample is a response to some

challenge or goal, the details of how you met that goal, and then what happened next.

What are good online platforms for portfolios?

There are plenty of options out there for hosting a digital portfolio. Each platform has its strengths and weaknesses, so look around and see what works best for your purposes. Here are some of the most popular platforms:

- WordPress
- Wix
- Virb
- Weebly
- Squarespace
- Google Sites
- Digication

Where can a find additional information about creating portfolios?

The WRD Blog has a webpage with posts about portfolios:

<https://wrdblog.org/tag/portfolio/>.

MA WRD: Learning Outcomes

- Describe key concepts, theories, and histories in the study of writing and rhetoric.
- Produce complex written arguments that demonstrate a clear, cohesive, and appropriate written style.
- Design persuasive multimodal texts.
- Assess the ethical, civic, or political dimensions of rhetoric, language, or writing technologies, including dynamics of culture and power
- **A) (PDW only)** Compose effective texts for specific workplace or professional audiences; or, **B) (TWL only)** Apply current theories and principles of writing pedagogy to the production and analysis of pedagogical material.

Mid-Program Portfolio: An Overview

Purpose

- To compose a digital portfolio that showcases your writing, learning, and academic identity.
- To account for your own writing and learning choices as you pursue the MA WRD.
- To reflect on your MA experience and to prepare for your MA completion.

Audience

Your advisor as a representative of MA WRD faculty and yourself

Overview

The Mid-Program Portfolio demonstrates the work you have done in the MA WRD program. View the portfolio as a well-supported argument regarding your commitment to the MA program learning outcomes. It should describe and explain how your course work, research, and writing- and teaching-related experiences have evolved over your time in the MA program, and how this work is helping you to achieve program goals, personal goals, and current or future career goals.

After completing the sixth course but before taking the ninth course, you must submit a portfolio to your advisor and meet with him/her to discuss both the portfolio and your future plans in the program. The Mid-Program Portfolio must be submitted, discussed with your advisor, and approved before you can register for your ninth course in the program.

If you would like to see samples of successful **Professional Portfolios** by previous students Anthony Melville (<https://anthonymelville.com/>) and Kelsey Bolger (<https://kelseybolgerportfolio.wordpress.com/>).

Requirements

Composing a portfolio requires that you keep track of your work (**collection**), take responsibility for selecting work samples that represent your achievements (**selection**), and reflect on your work, processes, and intellectual growth (**reflection**). Your overall task is to select and reflect on your work in the MA program, and to assemble it in a manner that demonstrates your skill and versatility as a graduate student of MA WRD.

In addition to an “**About**” page, **CV** or **résumé**, and **contact information**, your portfolio must include **Work Samples** and **Commentary**.

Work Samples

The portfolio must include evidence from 4–6 projects that you have completed in the MA. These artifacts may be presented in the exact format in which they were submitted for a class, or you may revise them for the purpose of the portfolio. Each work sample should include sufficient contextual information—including the assignment sheet and information about when and how the assignment was situated in the course—so that your advisor can understand the assignment and its role in a particular course. Along with these work samples, you may include additional materials that support the portfolio’s arguments, including drafts in-class exercises, reading notes, summaries, proposals, e-mails, sketches, etc.

Quick Tips

- Be conscious of any sensitive information in your work samples, and make sure to secure permission from your clients or organizations before sharing work you have done for them.
- Some web platforms may show advertising on your portfolio. Be aware of the costs to remove advertisements before choosing a platform. For example, WordPress has a paid upgrade that allows you to remove advertisements and make a unique domain name.
- Embedding your work samples is always better than linking because it keeps your audience on your site. To do this, you can use web services like embed.ly or use an HTML iframe to embed a shareable Google Doc.

Commentary

The portfolio must include reflection commentary that shows how you are thinking about your learning and growth, what connections you are making among classes and experiences, and how you are meeting the program’s learning outcomes. You must include two types of commentary:

1. An explanatory reflection essay within the portfolio, of at least 500 words, that summarizes your learning and growth, articulates connections you are making among classes and experiences, defines how you are meeting the program’s learning outcomes, and outlines a course of action to maximize your remaining time in the program.

2. A series of curated comments interspersed throughout the portfolio that discuss how the work sample led to a specific achievement or learning outcome or how the sample connects to other projects, learning outcomes, or lessons learned. Think of these comments like the curated comments in a museum—text that helps a visitor understand what she is seeing as she walks through the exhibits. You might use the **S.T.A.R. Method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to do the following:
 - a. position, explain, analyze, or reflect on your featured work sample;
 - b. help the reader understand the assignment or task the work sample represents, how you approached the task, and why you made the decisions you made; and,
 - c. be specific and concrete, providing a detailed account of a learning experience and relevant contexts.

Rhetorical Design

Digital affordances should be used to enhance your audience's understanding (e.g., usable section and page titles, clear organization, logical order and layout, effective images, links, embedded files, use of tables, etc.). Text should be formatted for readability, and images should be related to the rhetorical purpose.

Submission

The Mid-Program Portfolio is due at the beginning of Week 4 of the quarter after you have completed your sixth course. Please submit your portfolio by completing the Google Form: <https://forms.gle/j7y7qUQQ6mzX6fjy8>. The form asks you to submit a link to your portfolio as well as a .zip file containing full-page screenshots of each webpage of your portfolio.

Assessment

The Mid-Program Portfolio will be reviewed by your WRD advisor, who will email you by the end of week 5 to schedule a meeting that should occur between weeks 6 and 7. The portfolio will be evaluated as "Pass" or "Fail." A portfolio that does not initially earn a score of "Pass" must be revised until it does so in order for you to register for courses for the next quarter. Any questions about the portfolio should be directed to your advisor in the MA program.

Mid-Program Portfolio: Assessment

Rhetorical Reflection: Criteria

- Includes a persuasive collection of work samples (4–6 projects), including supporting materials.
- Demonstrates planning and thoughtfulness, making connections among reflection essay, curated comments, and work samples.
- Composes a rhetorically astute rationale for work samples, e.g., using the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result.
- Demonstrates multiple examples of achieving learning outcomes.
- Articulates an academic or professional identity.

Rhetorical Design: Criteria

- Applies design principles to compose portfolio, e.g., contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity, dominance, similarity, rhythm, texture, direction.
- Applies principles of navigation and visual hierarchy to compose portfolio, e.g., white space, type size + weight, color, visual ornamentation, genre conventions.
- Uses typography and color to enhance readability, legibility, and accessibility.
- Integrates multimedia elements to enhance rhetorical purpose and accessibility.
- Applies best practices for accessibility, e.g., alternate text for graphics, transcriptions for audio or video.

Professional Portfolio: An Overview

Purpose

- To compose a digital portfolio that showcases your writing, learning, and professional identity.
- To account for your own professional development.
- To reflect on your MA experience and to prepare for your MA completion.

Audience

Your professional field.

Overview

In the final quarter of coursework, you must submit a Professional Portfolio and reflection essay. In contrast to the Mid-Program Portfolio, which is composed for WRD faculty and oriented to your academic work in the program, the Professional Portfolio faces outward, intended to situate your work within a professional field and to appeal to prospective employers or professional colleagues.

The collection of work samples will be different depending on your professional audience: a portfolio for a practicing teacher will be different than one for an aspiring teacher, and both of these will be different than one for an aspiring professional writer.

For your Professional Portfolio, consider getting advice from peers and experts:

- Meet with your advisor and faculty members who have connections in your desired career field.
- Reach out to alumni working in your professional field.
- Schedule an appointment with the DePaul Career Center:
<https://resources.depaul.edu/career-center/Pages/default.aspx>.

Finally, the Professional Portfolio will be accompanied by a reflection essay that describes the portfolio's key audiences, articulates how the work samples and design choices were made in relation to your audience.

If you would like to see samples of successful **Professional Portfolios** by previous students Anthony Melville (<https://anthonymelville.com/>) and Kelsey Bolger (<https://kelseyportfolio.wordpress.com/>).

Requirements

Composing a portfolio requires that you keep track of your work (**collection**), take responsibility for selecting work samples that represent your achievements (**selection**), and reflect on your work, processes, and professional growth (**reflection**). Your overall task is to select and reflect on your work from the MA program, and to assemble it in a manner that demonstrates your skill and versatility as a professional within your field.

In addition to an “**About**” page, **CV** or **résumé**, and **contact information**, your portfolio must include **Work Samples** and **Commentary**.

Work Samples

The Professional Portfolio must include evidence from 4–6 projects that you have completed in the MA. The selected work samples should be work that you could present to potential employers or professional colleagues. Therefore, you should include work samples that closely match expectations (e.g., content, design, genre) in the professional field you hope to join.

A work sample is only as persuasive as the way you contextualize it. One useful framing method is the **S.T.A.R. Method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result). This framing method is designed to show how the sample is a response to some challenge or goal, the details of how you met that goal, and then what happened next.

Quick Tips

- Be conscious of any sensitive information in your work samples, and make sure to secure permission from your clients or organizations before sharing work you have done for them.
- Some web platforms may show advertising on your portfolio. Be aware of the costs to remove advertisements before choosing a platform. For example, WordPress has a paid upgrade that allows you to remove advertisements and make a unique domain name.
- Embedding your work samples is always better than linking because it keeps employers on your site. To do this, you can use web services like embed.ly or use an HTML iframe to embed a shareable Google Doc.

Rhetorical Design

Digital affordances should be used to enhance the reader's understanding (e.g., usable section and page titles, clear organization, logical order and layout, effective images, links, embedded files, use of tables, etc.). Text should be formatted for readability, and images should be related to the rhetorical purpose.

Commentary

Along with your Professional Portfolio, you will submit a separate reflection essay, of at least 500 words, that situates your portfolio within the intended professional field. The reflection essay should explain how the portfolio is a fitting response to your professional plans. You are encouraged to complete a draft of the reflection essay early in the process and to share it with those well-positioned to assist you in planning for your professional goals. The reflection essay should address:

- Your professional audience;
- Research you may have completed in studying your professional field, such as the genre conventions for a professional portfolio in that field;
- Expectations of employees in the role/s you hope to fill, e.g., preparations, skills, technical competencies; and,
- Weaknesses in preparations, skills, and technical competencies in relation to your professional audience and purpose, and how you have developed the portfolio to offset them.

Submission

The Professional Portfolio is due at the beginning of Week 4 of your last quarter in the program. Please submit your portfolio by completing the Google Form: <https://forms.gle/qhs6apmzDgAuyCn2A>. The form asks you to submit a link to your portfolio as well as a .zip file containing full-page screenshots of each webpage of your portfolio.

Assessment

The Professional Portfolio will be evaluated by the WRD Graduate Committee as "Pass" or "Fail." By the end of week 6, you will receive an assessment of your portfolio. If your portfolio is not deemed passing, you must revise and resubmit the portfolio by the end of week 8. A portfolio that does not initially earn a score of "Pass" must be revised until it does so. Any questions about the portfolio should be directed to your advisor in the MA program.

Professional Portfolio: Assessment

Rhetorical Reflection: Criteria

- Includes a persuasive collection of work samples (4–6 projects), including supporting materials.
- Demonstrates planning and thoughtfulness, making connections among reflection essay, curated comments, and work samples.
- Composes a rhetorically astute rationale for work samples, e.g., using the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result.
- Demonstrates multiple examples of developing professional achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.
- Articulates a professional identity.

Rhetorical Design: Criteria

- Applies design principles to compose portfolio, e.g., contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity, dominance, similarity, rhythm, texture, direction.
- Applies principles of navigation and visual hierarchy to compose portfolio, e.g., white space, type size + weight, color, visual ornamentation, genre conventions.
- Uses typography and color to enhance readability, legibility, and accessibility.
- Integrates multimedia elements to enhance rhetorical purpose and accessibility.
- Applies best practices for accessibility, e.g., alternate text for graphics, transcriptions for audio or video.

Portfolio Planning Activity

Inventory projects or work you have completed: begin with three to five work samples. If you are having trouble, try logging into D2L and looking at past courses to jog your memory. Consider the following examples:

- Unique or compelling coursework
- A project that had a challenging process
- Projects that developed a skill or methodological proficiency
- Internship projects, service-learning projects, or other real-world experiences
- Teaching experiences
- Volunteer experiences

Using the table, frame the work samples using the S.T.A.R. method:

- **Situation** describes the context of the work sample. Explain the course, client, and other situational constraints.
- **Task** describes the intended purpose of the work sample. This purpose could be framed in terms of an assignment or your role in the project.
- **Action (or Approach)** describes the specific steps you took to complete the task. Include explicit detail about your work process, explaining why you made the decisions you made. Take note of things like drafts and deliverables and what kind of materials, software, or tools you used and competencies or skills you developed. For group projects, focus specifically on the work you contributed.
- **Results** explain what happened after the project or work was completed. Describe any feedback, revisions, next steps, consequences, or changes that came about because of the work.

Artifact	Dates	Situation	Task	Action	Results

Using what you developed in the table, try writing out a narrative of one of your samples. **Situation** and **Task** may be covered in a few sentences. **Action** should be the bulk of your contextual framing. Keep in mind the context in which your audience will be reading: Draw attention to the most important information so they do not have to spend too much time reading.