



A Career Portfolio is an in-depth career summary you create to showcase your unique skills and rare talents. It's a tool you use to market yourself to employers and show them that you are the right person for the job, internship, or career position. Your résumé lists your qualifications. Your career portfolio contains samples of your work that **prove** you have the skills to do the job. Your career portfolio is a tool for life - as your skills grow, your career portfolio grows with you.

Get Organized

The Career Portfolio Process

- **Identify your Skills and Abilities** – Take a look at your education, job history, and other experiences, and make a list of what you can do.
- **Create your Career Goals** – Look at the career you want to have, and figure out what additional skills you need to get there; whether it is more training, more job experience, or time on the job. Create career goals and make a plan for reaching those goals.
- **Find Work Samples** – Work samples are the key to your career portfolio, the proof that you can do what you say you can. You may need to request a letter of recommendation, develop a checklist of skills, find documents that show the work you do on the job, or take pictures of yourself in action.
- **Assemble a Career Portfolio for each use** – Organize and assemble your career portfolio to highlight your key skills. You can create a hard copy portfolio to show in an interview, and an electronic version which people can view online.

The Career Portfolio is a tool you use to show someone you are the right person for:

- the job
- the internship
- the scholarship
- admittance to a specific program
- the promotion
- the raise.

The Career Portfolio Starter



Identifying Your Skills

It's time to take an inventory to identify the skills, knowledge, abilities, and talents that can make you an asset to a company. What do you have to offer an employer?

You've gained skills in many different ways:

- On the job
- Past jobs
- In a classroom or training
- Volunteering
- Memberships
- Community involvement
- Hobbies
- Military service
- Family experiences



You probably have more skills than you think. So, how do you identify the individual skills from each experience? Refer to:

- **Job descriptions** - list key skills and abilities needed to do each job. This can include jobs related to your volunteer experiences and interests.
- **College course catalogs** - list the skills and knowledge from a degree program.
- **Training brochures** - identify key skills learned in a seminar or workshop.
- **Online job sites** - provide additional information about different careers.
- **Websites and printed materials** - list the benefits of professional memberships and volunteering.

Basic of a Career Portfolio

Work samples and documents are organized behind tabs in a career portfolio.

Career Portfolio Sections:

Tab 1: Work Philosophy & Goals

- **Work Philosophy** - Your beliefs about yourself, people, and your outlook on work.
- **Goals** - Your career goals for the next two to five years
- **Professional Bio** - A paragraph about you

Tab 2: Resumé

Tab 3: Key Skill Area 1:

- **3-5 Work samples** for your most important skill

Tab 4: Key Skill Area 2:

- **3-5 Work samples** for another skill area

Tab 5: Key Skill Area 3:

- **3-5 Work samples** for another skill area

Optional Tabs:

- **Community Service, Internships, Military Service, Awards, Certifications**

Last Tab: Additional Resources including:

- **Faculty & Employer Bio Sheet** - A who's who of people who appear in your work samples.
- **Academic Plan of Study** - A listing of the courses you have taken to fulfill your degree.
- **References** - A list of people who can verify your character, academic record, or employment history.

Every work sample should prove a skill or answer a question.

Types of Work Samples

Here's a list of work samples you can use in your portfolio:

- Certifications
- Letters of reference, appreciation, thanks, participation.
- **Photos** of your work, projects, community service
- **Media** - Video/CD of activities, demonstrate technical skills, and knowledge of how to integrate technology.
- **Documents** created or used on the job
- **Degrees/Diplomas**
- **Job Samples**
 - Include work samples from your job tasks.
 - Select specific samples that match the requirements of the new position and prove your skills.
- **Academic samples**
- Include research papers
- Presentations
- Special projects
- Course descriptions
- Major/minor overviews
- Program overviews



Know Your Keywords

Look at the requirements for your target job and the skills that are required. What keywords are associated with that position? These are the keywords you should use to organize and group your work samples.

A dietitian might use these keywords:

- Patient Education
- Sports Nutrition
- Food Science

An engineer might use:

- Mechanical Engineering
- Hybrid Technology
- Engine Mechanics
- Communication

Target your keywords to each job interview and position.

Customizing Your Career Portfolio

The work samples you include in your career portfolio should change, depending on the interview.

- Review the purpose of your career portfolio. Are you looking for a job, competing for an internship, or trying for a promotion? The work samples you show will vary based on the reasons behind your career portfolio.
- What criteria are people using when reviewing your skills and experience? This will impact the contents you include. What do they need to see to make good decisions about you?
- What qualities are they looking for when reviewing you? What are their expectations?

Answer these questions, and you have set the guidelines for choosing and organizing work samples with impact.

Take Action!



Exercise: Identifying Work Samples and Keywords

Take a look at all your jobs, education, activities, interests, community service, and military experience, and list work samples you could use to prove your skills. Then assign a keyword that describes that sample.

Work Samples I Can Use to Prove My Skills	Keyword That Describes this Sample
Tasks I Perform/ Equipment I Operate/ Special Skills	
Communication, Coordination, Time Management, Leadership, Teamwork Skills	

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