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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Developing an Academic Portfolio: Guidelines** | http://www.uts.edu.au/images/dot_clear.gif | | http://www.uts.edu.au/images/dot_clear.gif |  | | http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/images/Hrule.gif |  | | [What is an academic portfolio?](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#what) [What should it include?](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#include) [How do you begin?](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#how) [Example 1: Alison's portfolio](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#alison) [Example 2: Salena's portfolio](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#salena) [What is 'reflection'?](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#reflection) [What sections should the portfolio contain?](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#sections) [Teaching and educational development](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#teaching) [Scholarship and the advancement of knowledge and its applications](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#scholar) [Contributions to the university and the community](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#contribution) [Academic leadership](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#leadership) [Personal academic plans and goals](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#personal) What is an academic portfolio? An Academic Portfolio is an organised record of your academic experiences, achievements and professional development over a period of time. It consists of a collection of documents which illustrate the variety and quality of work that you do, along with your reflections on these documents and on your development over time. A portfolio can be kept in a variety of ways: in a folder with sub-sections, in a series of files in your filing cabinet, or in electronic form with a file of supporting documentation. What should it include? There are three major areas of academic work that you should include in your portfolio:   * teaching and educational development; * scholarship and the advancement of knowledge and its applications; * contributions to the university and the community.   You should include some evidence of your participation and reflection in each of these areas, although at any point in your academic career your work is likely to have a greater focus on some areas than on others. If your appointment is at level B (lecturer) or higher, you would consider a fourth aspect, that of leadership within the university. As well as including these areas of academic work, try to include an overview section where you reflect on and review your activities in relation to your overall goals and career plans.  Developing an Academic Portfolio is intended to help you to improve your current practice through reflection and self evaluation. We suggest that all academics develop a portfolio for their professional development and as an aid to identifying goals and evidence for career progression. Extracts from a portfolio can be particularly useful for supporting applications for tenure or promotion.  These guidelines suggest ways that you can develop your Portfolio to encompass the major areas of academic practice including teaching and educational development, research and scholarship, university and community service and the development of potential for academic leadership. As each academic's experience and context will be different there is no expectation that all Academic Portfolios will be similar. Rather they should contain evidence of individual academic achievements and experiences, with reflections on these experiences. How do you begin? Developing a portfolio is an ongoing process. As your portfolio develops over time, you will include documents which provide evidence of a wide range of activities and achievements, along with your reflections on these documents. Getting started means beginning to create a framework and sections for your portfolio which you find useful and can continue to use, then adding one or two items at a time as you engage with different aspects of your work. [Alison's portfolio](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#alison) and [Salena's portfolio](http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/resources/res/#salena) show examples of what could be compiled over the course of a semester.  There is no single right way of keeping a portfolio. Whatever method you use, you should try to add to your documents and reflections on a regular basis, both to assist your professional development and so that your portfolio will be up to date for occasions when you discuss your academic progress with your supervisor or are planning an application for promotion. Example 1: Alison's portfolio  |  | | --- | | Alison is a new Associate Lecturer whose immediate goals include learning to teach effectively in tutorials and lectures, and commencing a PhD. This is what her portfolio contains by the end of her first semester:  **Overview and personal information**   * A statement of goals that she negotiated with her supervisor; * A copy of her CV; * A career timeline which she did during a career planning workshop.   **Teaching**   * A brief description of how she sees her role as a teacher in lectures and tutorials; * An outline of the subject she co-ordinates with notes on changes for next time; * A handout and learning guide from a workshop on teaching in tutorials where she reflected on how to encourage more student interaction in her tutorials; * A summary of student responses to an open-ended questionnaire about her tutorials, with her comments about actions to take.   **Scholarship and research**   * A series of notes about a possible topic for her PhD proposal; * An application for School conference funding, which includes a statement about the relevance of the conference to her research development.   **Service to the university and the community**   * A copy of her response to an email from the Head of School asking for suggestions for improving the School's orientation for new students. |  Example 2: Salena's portfolio  |  | | --- | | Salena is a new Lecturer who has come to UTS after two years as an academic in another university. Her goals are to build her research and publication profile and further develop her teaching with the aim of applying for promotion within three years. Some of the supporting evidence she collects in her portfolio in the first semester includes:  **Overview and personal information**   * A statement of the goals she negotiated with her academic supervisor; * A career and development plan that she negotiated with her mentor; * Copies of her full CV and short CVs for grant applications.   **Teaching and educational development**   * Subject outlines and summaries of student feedback on the subject she co-ordinates, with notes on the changes she intends to make to the subject as a result; * A copy of her Student Learning module assignment which she did as part of the development program for new academics; * Her research supervision journal in which she notes and reflects on her meetings with her new PhD student; * A list of the teaching workshops and supervisor forums that she attended during the semester.   **Scholarship and research**   * The abstract of a joint paper with a colleague which has been accepted for a conference at the end of the year; * Notes for an internal research grant application that she intends to submit later in the year; * An invitation to present a research seminar on her recently completed PhD research at another university in Sydney; * An updated publications list; * A copy of an email from a journal thanking her for being a referee.   **Service to the university and the community**   * A copy of a Faculty guide for research students which she helped to update; * A list of her committee and professional association memberships.   **Academic leadership**   * An email from a part-time tutor thanking her for her support in co-ordinating the subject. |  What is 'reflection'? Reflection is a process of reviewing and thinking critically about our activities and the world around us. It goes beyond describing what we do, to thinking about why we do things, whether they have gone as intended, why we think they worked well or didn't and how we might do them differently next time. Recording these reflective thoughts can help us to crystallise our understanding of experiences, make connections between different aspects of our work and identify possible improvements. Recording personal reflections has the added benefit of documenting learning over time through recognising the changing nature of your reflections.  Reflection includes constantly testing the assumptions and actions related to our work. Brookfield (1995) describes reflective teaching in the following way:  *Critically reflective teaching happens when we identify and scrutinise the assumptions that undergird how we work. The most effective way to become aware of these assumptions is to view our practice from different perspectives. Seeing how we think and work through different lenses is the core process of reflective practice.*(Brookfield 1995, p.xii-xiii)  In the case of teaching, the different 'lenses' that Brookfield refers to include personal beliefs and the perspectives gained from students, colleagues, and reading the literature. Reflecting on the evidence that you collect from a range of different sources is an important component of creating your Academic Portfolio. The private and public faces of the portfolio It is quite reasonable to keep some aspects of the academic portfolio private. There are likely to be some reflections or documents which are important for your development but which you do not wish to show to others.  A well developed academic portfolio would be too much to present for either your discussions with your academic supervisor or for a promotion committee. It would be more appropriate to include an extract with descriptions of and reflections on your major achievements and references to other documentation. What sections should the portfolio contain? The following guidelines provide advice on developing different sections of your portfolio. For the three major areas of academic work, we have included some advice on:   * describing what that aspect of your work means to you, including possible questions for reflection; * sources of evidence you could include in documenting that aspect of your work ; * questions for making a self evaluation of your achievements and development.   The ideas described are suggestions. Your portfolio will be individual and is likely to have more emphasis in some areas than in others. Remember that an effective portfolio will include both documentary evidence and reflection, eg. a subject outline that you have developed with a reflection on the effectiveness of the outline in terms of student learning and the changes you may make as a result. Teaching and educational development Many academics, especially those at Associate Lecturer and Lecturer level, spend a great deal of time preparing for teaching, teaching and assessing their students' learning. We hope that developing this section of the portfolio will enable you to improve your practice as a teacher through reflection and self evaluation.  Imagine that you are trying to give someone else a picture of your teaching - what you do and why you do it that way. Your portfolio should create a picture that illustrates some of the complexity and variety of what you do and why. At minimum, your portfolio would include a statement outlining your own teaching philosophy, and an overview of your teaching experience: the range of subjects and classes you have taught, postgraduate supervision etc. It would then include some items documenting different aspects of your teaching. What teaching means to you Firstly it would be a good idea to describe your own understanding of teaching and the way in which you see the relationship between teaching and learning. In this way you will have a record of your thoughts on teaching and learning as you commence your career as an academic at UTS and you will be able to return to your initial ideas from time to time and consider the development and changes that have occurred as you have developed your expertise. This section could be private to begin with, but later you might develop a description of your teaching philosophy to include in the portfolio extract that you would show to others. Questions for reflection  * What are your overall teaching goals and the goals that you have for your students' learning? * How does your teaching encourage student learning? Consider your subject objectives, teaching approaches, learning tasks for students, assessment and feedback. * How do you know whether your teaching has encouraged student learning? * How confident and comfortable do you feel about your teaching and what helps you to develop confidence? * How have your experiences helped you to develop or change your understanding of teaching and learning?  Supporting evidence Examples that could be used to support or give evidence for your teaching over time may include:   * A series of subject outlines for a subject you have taught for several years, with a reflection on why you made the changes you did; * A reading list that you give to students, with reflections on how students responded to the references chosen; * Case studies developed from your class room experiences. This could be in the form of a description of the experience and then a reflection about the experience followed by recommendations for continued development or change, eg. an outline of a lecture or tutorial, with your reflection on why the session was conducted that way, how it went and any proposed changes; * A description of and reflection on an innovative teaching approach, why the approach was chosen, whether it achieved its intentions and any suggested changes for next time; * An interview with a student about her/his approach to learning in your lectures, with your reflection on whether this matched your expectations; * Examples of assessment tasks, with your reflection on the appropriateness of those tasks; * Examples of student work, with your feedback attached, and a reflection on your response to the student's work; * A peer evaluation of a teaching session, with a reflection on your response; * Student evaluations of the subject, with a reflection on how consistent they are with your self-evaluation and what changes you have made as a result; * Description of and reflection on a supervision session with a postgraduate student, highlighting your intentions and contribution, and discussing this in relation to your views on supervision; * Excerpts from a good student project, with a reflection on how you helped the student to develop ideas; * A flyer describing a workshop on teaching you attended, with a reflection on the impact this had on your teaching.  Questions for self evaluation  * To what extent have your personal goals for teaching been met? * How do you know whether you have been teaching well, and what evidence do you have of good teaching? * What are your main achievements in teaching and what evidence do you have for these? * What is your progress towards achieving the teaching goals that you have negotiated with your supervisor? * What support have you received to develop your teaching and what would you need to develop further as a teacher?  Scholarship and the advancement of knowledge and its applications Scholarship can be defined in several ways according to your academic context. In UTS documentation (eg in promotion guidelines) 'scholarship' is described as the distillation and integration of knowledge. Scholarship of this type would be expected in most areas of academic work, including teaching, research, consultancy and many types of service to the community. In reflecting on scholarship, you are encouraged to think about how you keep up to date in your field and continue to distil and integrate knowledge, both in your research and in your teaching, both in terms of content and process.  'Advancement of knowledge' includes activities which might commonly be referred to as research. The Academic Portfolio could be used to enable you to reflect upon the nature of research in your discipline, the research process and how you see yourself as a researcher. It could enable you to reflect upon your own development as a scholar and/or researcher and provide evidence of research development and contribution. What scholarship and the advancement of knowledge means to you At the beginning of this section it might be useful to describe how you see scholarship in your discipline. Describe what it means to distil and integrate knowledge in your discipline area, what sources of knowledge are important and how you engage in scholarship in the different parts of your work, including your teaching.  Now describe what 'advancement of knowledge' or research means in your discipline, and how this relates to your own research interests and your development as a researcher. In some disciplines (eg the physical sciences) describing what research means might be fairly straightforward, in others (eg design or production studies) it might be more difficult to define and include aspects such as original creative contributions. It might be helpful to talk to one or two senior colleagues about the nature of research in your field and then reflect on their ideas. Questions for reflection about scholarship  * How do you keep up to date in your discipline area? What sources do you use to do this? * In what ways is your work scholarly? * How would you describe scholarship in teaching, and how do you apply it to your own teaching? * In what ways do you enable your students to engage with current ideas in your discipline area? This could include thinking about how you relate your research to your teaching.<  Questions for reflection about the advancement of knowledge  * What are your personal research interests? * What are your research goals or intentions? * How does your research interests fit into the interests of your academic department? * In what ways can your research make a contribution to your discipline? * How do you find out about sources of funding and resources which could support your research? * How have your experiences helped you to develop or change your understanding of research and scholarship in your discipline?  Supporting evidence  * A reading log showing the journals and other publications which you read on a regular basis; * Notes and reflections on research seminars you have attended in your School/Department or discussions with your colleagues; * Notes you have kept in the process of working with a mentor, with your reflection on what you are learning from the process; * Copies of contributions of a scholarly kind made to computer based research discussion groups or listserves; * An up to date publications list, with separate headings for refereed journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, contributions to other materials etc, along with reflections on what you see as your most important publications; * Copies of referees' reports on your writings and letters of acceptance from journals; * Invitations to referee papers for journals in your field; * Copies of publications which cite your research; * Copies of grant applications; * Invitations to present your research at seminars.  Questions for self evaluation  * To what extent have your personal goals for scholarship and the advancement of knowledge been met? * What evidence do you have that you are contributing to the advancement of knowledge in your field or developing the potential to do so? * What are your main achievements in research and scholarship and what evidence do you have for these? * What is your progress towards achieving the research goals that you have negotiated with your supervisor? * What support have you received to develop your research and scholarship and what would you need to develop further as a researcher?  Contributions to the university and the community The university expects all academics to make ongoing contributions to the university and to the role of the university in the community, at a level appropriate for their level of appointment. Activities which constitute a minimum contribution to the university will generally be part of your normal duties. This would involve reliable performance of your administrative responsibilities, contributions to policy development at a level appropriate for your level of appointment and for some academics the initiation or maintenance of links between the University and external groups (see promotions policies).  The nature of other contributions to the university and the community can vary markedly between individual academics according to their interests, abilities, discipline area, opportunities and level of appointment. Contributions to the university from level A or B academics could include active participation in Faculty or university committees or working parties, organisation or management of particular functions or events in your Faculty or taking on a role such as Academic Liaison Officer. Contributions to the community could include: involvement in professional societies or community groups relevant to your discipline area; organisation of public events, exhibitions, forums or meetings; membership of policy advisory or expert groups.  Some opportunities to contribute occur fortuitously but others may need to be planned for, initiated or deliberately sought. This is an area where your supervisor should be able to assist you, for example, by suggesting activities appropriate to your expertise and interests, suggesting your name for membership of committees or by referring you to colleagues or contacts within the university or elsewhere.  **Include a statement about the nature of your contributions to the university and the community.**  It could be helpful to describe the contributions which are expected of you in your academic unit, and outline your understanding of the kinds of contributions which are most commonly made in your discipline area. Then describe the expertise and interests that you have which might be most relevant to making further scholarly contributions to the university and community. Questions for reflection  * What administrative responsibilities are expected in your position? * What contributions to the university are expected of academics at your level in your academic unit? * How are you developing your knowledge and understanding of the university so that you can identify opportunities for making useful contributions? * What opportunities might there be for you to make an active scholarly contribution outside the university?  Supporting evidence  * Up-to-date lists of memberships of committees and professional societies; * A description of a specific contribution you have made to the work of a committee and reflections on the effects or impact of your contribution; * A description of your participation in working groups with a reflection on your main contributions; * Copies of publicity or other materials from events that you have organised with a reflection on your contribution * Letters of thanks for your work from professional bodies or community groups; * Invitations to address public meetings or make contributions.  Questions for self evaluation  * What have been your most important contributions to the university and the community, and what evidence do you have of these contributions? * How far has your involvement reflected your intentions and your academic unit's expectations? * How has your contribution enhanced the quality of the university or community's work? * What is your progress towards achieving the goals that you have negotiated with your supervisor? * What support have you received to develop your contributions in this area and what would you need to develop your contributions further?  Academic leadership Academics at levels A and B are not usually required to perform leadership roles, however you may have opportunities to demonstrate leadership potential, for example by taking a leading role in a teaching development or research initiative. Promotion to Senior Lecturer requires that the applicant provide indications of a capacity for academic leadership within the university and promotion to Associate Professor requires that the applicant demonstrate leadership capacity. It would be wise to give some thought to the development of your leadership skills and qualities, and to document activities where you believe you have demonstrated a capacity for leadership. Personal academic plans and goals The above sections describe the sections of the portfolio from which you are most likely to extract documentation to demonstrate your achievements and support applications for tenure, contract renewal or promotion. In addition to this, it may be helpful to consider how these activities fit with your personal goals and plans, or what kind of pattern they show when looked at together.  This final section of the portfolio could be private, but you might want to share aspects of it in discussion with your supervisor or mentor. Although the promotion, tenure and probation planning processes include consideration of broad goals, there are some other issues that could be very important to assist you to develop an on going plan for the future. Questions for reflection  * What gives me the most satisfaction as an academic? * What causes frustration and is there anything I can do about it? * Where would I really like to be in my career in a year's time, five year's time, ten year's time? * Do I have any particular goals that I would like to achieve? * How consistent is what I am doing now in my work with my answers to the above questions? * Are my goals and career plans consistent with the goals negotiated with my supervisor, or should I consider some re-negotiation? * Who could help my career at present? |  | |
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