One of the most difficult things about putting together a professional portfolio is that there is no hard, fast rule about what to include. Portfolios are unique among fields and individuals. In general, your portfolio should be a collection of materials and examples that demonstrate your qualifications for a particular career.

PURPOSE
A portfolio is a place to market your skills, experiences, and accomplishments. Some of the varied purposes of a portfolio include:

- Reflecting on your professional goals
- Assessing your strengths and weaknesses
- Document your professional progress
- Document the scope and quality of your experience and training
- Promoting dialogue with colleagues
- Gathering detailed data to support your goals
- Providing evidence of your success

CONTENT
The content in your portfolio should be unique to you and your experience and should be chosen based on the type of positions you are applying for. Aside from a mandatory table of contents (so employers know where to look!), the following are some of the things you might include:

Career Profile and Goals: Details your career history and your long and short term career goals.

Professional Philosophy/Mission Statement: A short description of the guiding principles that drive you and give you purpose. This statement can be a general statement about your work ethic or specific to your industry of interest.

Résumé and Reference List: Should be relevant and tailored to the position.

List of Accomplishments: A detailed listing that highlights your career accomplishments thus far.

Samples of Your Work: Exactly what it sounds like—may include reports, papers, studies, brochures, projects, presentations, whatever is relevant. This should include only your best work. Do not be afraid to use multimedia formats.

Research, Publications, Reports: Include any published papers and conference proceedings.

Testimonials and Letters of Recommendations: A collection of positive feedback you have received from relevant customers, clients, past employers and professors; perhaps even a positive employer/teaching evaluation or review.

Awards and Honors: A collection or list of any certificates, awards, honors, and scholarships—be sure this does not too closely mirror a section of you résumé.

Transcripts, Degrees, Licenses, and Certifications: A description of relevant courses, degrees, licenses, and certifications.
Professional Development Activities: A list of professional development activities in which you have participated, including professional association memberships and conferences or workshops attended.

Military Records, Awards, and Badges: Include a list of your military experience if it will be relevant.

Volunteering/Community Service: Describe any community service or pro bono work you have completed; be sure to point out if it relates to your career.

PRESENTATION

General Guidelines
- Rather than just listing experiences, analyze. Otherwise, a portfolio is no different than your résumé!
- Be representative across your skills and experiences. A portfolio should be a comprehensive representation of your work.
- Be sure to keep the portfolio manageable, clear, and legible. Simple is key, you do not want to overload with page after page of lengthy text. Pay careful attention to conciseness and selectivity to appropriately document your work. Avoid the tendency to document everything.

Printed Portfolio
- Invest in a quality faux leather three-ring binder—design professionals should have an artist’s portfolio
- Place documents inside plastic, non-glare page protectors
- Consider burning your portfolio to a CD that you can easily leave with employers or creating an online portfolio/website
- Consider printing out a hard copy of your portfolio to leave with employers
- For awards, transcripts, licenses and similar qualifications, take the opportunity to include (or scan) copies of the actual documents

Online Portfolios
- Scan printed documents or create hyperlinks to include items such as awards, transcripts, licenses, and similar qualifications.
- Ensure that the navigation is easy to follow and that employers would not have difficulty finding information.
- Consider the purpose of any decorative elements, remember that white space will give a professional feel to your portfolio—the more visual elements the harder it will be to maintain a feeling of professionalism.
- If you rely only upon a digital portfolio, do not expect the interviewer to have viewed it. Consider bringing along a copy to reference during your interview.

FIELDS UTILIZING PORTFOLIOS
Students from any major can utilize a portfolio as a tool to market themselves to prospective employers to set themselves apart from other candidates. The following is a list of fields that typically make use of portfolios:
- Teaching- see the Job Search Handbook for Educators, available in the Career & Leadership Development Center
- Graphic Design
- Journalism
- Fine Arts
- Media Arts
- Visual Communication

For more information visit the Career & Leadership Development Center web site.
Click on the Handout Library.