



# SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

## A WORKSHOP FOR SIU EDWARDSVILLE

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### Target Outcomes for the Day:

- Identify the challenges that portfolio assessment poses for adult students.
- Summarize various ways to provide support for the portfolio development process.
- Articulate learning outcomes for a portfolio development course for SIUE.
- Identify resources and facilitation strategies effective for adults in a portfolio development course.

### Agenda

11:00	Portfolio Components and Tasks for Adult Learners
11:30	Key Challenges for Adult Students and Related Solutions
12:15	Curricular and Co-curricular Supports for Portfolio Students
12:45	Working Lunch: Reviewing <i>Earn College Credit for What You Know</i>
1:15	Core Content for Portfolio Development Support Supplemental Content Drafting Learning Outcomes
2:00	Factor to Consider in Choosing Portfolio Support What Might Work at Your Institution
2:30	Staffing Portfolio Development Support Preparing Staff for Their Role
3:15	Key Exercises, Resources, and Facilitation Strategies
4:00	Close



## The Portfolio

A portfolio is both a claim of knowledge which was gained outside the formal classroom as a result of life experience and the evidence and documentation to support that claim. It is “a formal communication presented by a student to the college as part of a petition requesting credit or recognition for learning outside the college classroom.” (Colvin, 2012)

Portfolios are most useful when the learning is applied learning or “real world” tasks as opposed to learning more easily assessed through tests or demonstrations. For example, an adult with a keen interest in human geography may be better able to demonstrate what she knows by developing a portfolio which includes an analysis of shifting population centers with changes in the environment. Or, the woman who home schools her children, one of whom is diagnosed as being on the Asperger Spectrum and must employ two different teaching strategies to meet the needs of her two very different children.



## Typical Portfolio Contents (Colvin, 2012)

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Description</b>
Title page	Title, name, identification number, contact information and date.
Table of Contents	Lists the contents of the portfolio in order.
Goal statements or Forms with a signature of authenticity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Statement of student's educational goal.</li><li>2. Statement on how prior learning assessment relates to educational goal.</li><li>3. Statement on courses or outcomes being petitioned for credit.</li><li>4. Statement of authenticity and signature.</li></ol> Note: Some colleges have students notarize the statement of authenticity.
Learning chronology	Resume, learning chart, or learning autobiography with experience in chronological order.
Prior learning narrative or competency statements (repeated for each subject or outcome being petitioned)	Extensive learning narrative or competency statements matching the student's learning to the college-level course or outcomes being petitioned.
Index of supporting Documentation	List of supporting documentation that verifies the learning.
Supporting Documentation	Supporting documentation, numbered with captions.
Transcript copies And degree plan	Working copies of degree plan and transcripts to verify that credit being petitioned meets requirements for the student's goals and is not duplicated by previously earned credit.
Evaluation forms	Form used by evaluator to write the credit recommendation.



## Portfolio Development Models

Portfolio poses challenges for adult students, just as it often does for the institutions seeking to serve them. It provides an opportunity for learners to express their learning and competence and “make their case” that they have demonstrated course learning outcomes or other academic criteria. While the institution may offer a structure and format for portfolios, students create the substance and often need assistance in understanding the characteristics of effective portfolios. Institutions rely on a variety of structures to provide this support to students and “proactively provide guidance and support for learners’ full engagement in the assessment process.” (see Standard 6). Following are key considerations for offering portfolio support in ways that are sustainable and consistent with academic integrity:

1. **Sustainability.** Is portfolio support being offered in a way that will permit growth as greater numbers of student participate in portfolio assessment?
2. **Quality.** Is there a clear distinction between supporting students’ efforts and ensuring the award of credit? Portfolio development resources should not attempt to predict the assessment of the portfolio by a subject-matter expert.
3. **Feasibility.** Does the plan for portfolio development integrate into existing structures and staffing models? Is it consistent with other forms of academic support in terms of resource allocation?

Key decision points in choosing a portfolio development model:

Credit or noncredit course

Typically, this model is based on a credit-bearing course offering a full range of educational planning and portfolio development activities, such as:

- Educational skill building
- College orientation
- Educational and career goal setting
- Degree planning
- Learning style survey
- Structured portfolio development

Credit-bearing portfolio development courses might be designed as a blended model with weekend or evening classroom sessions followed by online assignments.



Online, face-to-face, or hybrid.

Usually a noncredit structured educational activity done with a group of students. Sometimes this model combines with a freshman orientation workshop or might be offered in a work setting

Workshop (fee-based or free)

Small group, facilitated instruction/discussion offered at times and locations convenient for students. These typically offer less content time than a credit or noncredit course.

One-on-one advising or coaching

Mentoring models provide one-on-one consultation, generally with a faculty or staff member. Effective practice depends on ensuring that advising or coaching regarding portfolio development does not evolve into independent study of course material.

Self-directed workshops or resources

Self-directed online portfolio workshops are noncredit bearing and may offer structured exercises, videos, workbooks, etc., to guide someone through the . portfolio development process. Many online programs, like LearningCounts<sup>®</sup>, often include a counselor/advisor available through e-mail or phone services.



CAEL’s Standards for Assessing Learning, revised in 2017, now include a standard devoted specifically to the institution’s role in providing support to students in the assessment process. What stands out for you in the wording of the standard?

In *Assessing Learning: Quality Standards and Institutional Commitments*, the ten standards are presented with corresponding questions designed to guide discussion among faculty and staff about the intention of each standard and the implications for practice. How do the questions for Standard 6 contribute to decisions about ways to support students in portfolio assessment?

<p>Institutions proactively provide guidance and support for learners’ full engagement in the assessment process.</p>	<p>Are students seen as partners in assessment or as recipients of assessment services?</p> <p>What opportunities do our students have in selecting tools and strategies to assess their learning?</p> <p>In what ways do our programs orient and reinforce students’ capabilities to self-assess?</p> <p>What kinds of services help students prepare for participation in assessment and support them in the process?</p> <p>What is the distinction between supporting students participation in assessment and coaching them to earn credit?</p>
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**Q:** *What options for portfolio development support seem best for your institution?*

