

## Institutional Effectiveness

2019-2020

**Program:** Sociology BS

**College and Department:** College of Arts & Sciences – Department of Political Science

**Contact:** Loretta Maxwell

**Mission:** Within the context of the University's mission, the mission of the Department is to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities.

The Department of Sociology has the primary mission of offering strong academic programs in sociology, criminology and criminal justice, social work (and political science). It provides students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and postgraduate educational possibilities. Students are educated to not only master a diverse body of knowledge but also to think critically, analyze data, and clearly communicate what they know and discover. Recognizing that we live in an increasingly technological and diverse world, we seek to incorporate technological expertise and appreciation of human diversity into our courses. The Department also strives to serve the wider university, the Upper Cumberland region, and the nation through research and public service.

Based on the mission to provide students with a quality liberal arts education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world and a variety of work environments and post-graduate educational possibilities, the Sociology program has identified two Program Goals and five student Learning Outcomes. These provide our students with a well-rounded education through fostering skills such as critical thinking, data analysis, effective communication and the ability to adapt to changing work environments within a variety of potential occupations. The two Program Goals and five student-Learning Outcomes also prepare our students to be more competitive on the job market or in graduate or law school after graduation.

### **Program Goals:**

PG 1: Sociology will have a sufficient number of students to sustain a strong educational program.

1. The Program will maintain a student population of at least 200 students. The threshold of acceptability for Sociology is 200 total majors and faculty attendance at Preview Days. If this is not met, a faculty review committee would be formed to recruit at Tennessee high schools.
2. The Program will be involved in recruitment initiatives such as participation in Majors' Fairs faculty engagement through Majors Fairs and Scholarship support.

PG 2: The Program of Sociology will offer both curricular and extracurricular options for majors.

1. Students will judge that a sufficient number of curricular and co-curricular activities were offered by the program as reported by our students.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

SLO 1: Majors in Sociology will develop knowledge of their discipline.

1. Majors in Sociology will demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level above or comparable to the national norm on the ETS Major Field Test.

SLO 2: Majors in Sociology will develop critical thinking skills.

1. Majors in Sociology will demonstrate critical thinking skills at a level above or comparable to the national mean based on the critical thinking sub-score on the ETS Major Field.

SLO 3: Majors in Sociology will be capable of effective oral and written communication.

1. Majors in Sociology will indicate confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively.

SLO 4: Majors in Sociology in the Criminology-Criminal Justice Concentration will be prepared for further Criminal Justice study and/or careers.

1. Majors in Sociology taking the Criminology-Criminal Justice concentration will demonstrate competence in their concentration (Criminal Justice) as evidenced by a department exam of Criminal Justice content. The threshold of acceptability is 70% passage for the SOC-CJ In-House Exam and was met in fall 2019.

SLO 5: Majors in Sociology will successfully complete an internship.

1. Majors in Sociology taking the Social Work concentration will be rated at a level above average by their supervisor when completing their required internship (Social Work). The threshold of acceptability is 90% of interns are expected to be evaluated at a level above average (outstanding or good) and this has been consistently met by our standards.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

**Assessment Methods:**

*PG 1: Sufficient number of students*

1. Tracking sheet of the number of Sociology majors
2. Tracking the number recruitment activities

*PG 2: Offer both curricular and extracurricular options*

1. Annual survey of majors is delivered through Qualtrics and assesses student satisfaction with curricular and co-curricular offerings in Sociology.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

*SLO 1: Develop knowledge of the discipline.*

1. Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field examination is administered each fall and spring semester to all enrolled majors in Sociology with senior classification.

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the ETS Major Field Examination is defined as Tech students having a mean score no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

*SLO 2: Develop critical thinking skills.*

1. Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field examination is administered each fall and spring semester to all enrolled majors in Sociology with senior classification.

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the ETS Major Field Examination is defined as Tech students having a mean score no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

*SLO 3: Effective oral and written communication.*

1. Sociology analyzes the results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in order to assess student confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively. The results of the National Survey of Student Engagement allow us to assess how well our students perform on learning Outcome 3 by determining their capabilities in effectively using written and oral skills. These results are compared to other TTU students and to our Carnegie peer institutions.

The threshold of acceptability is improvement from the freshman year to the senior year in critical thinking skills on the NSSE data, and this threshold was met.

*SLO 4: Prepared for Criminal Justice study and/or careers.*

1. Criminal Justice Competence is a multiple choice exam covering topics in criminal justice developed by faculty in the department. The exam is taken by majors in the criminal justice concentration and administered along with the ETS major field exam.

Sociology majors with the criminal justice concentration will be expected to answer 75% or more of the questions correctly on a multiple choice exam covering topics in criminal justice. The exam was developed by faculty in the department, and will be administered during the ETS major field exam.

*SLO 5: Successfully complete an internship.*

1. Supervisor Internship Evaluation Form is completed by the student's supervisor at the internship location. Overall performance on the Supervisor Internship Evaluation Form is rated on a scale of: Outstanding; Good; Average; Fair; or, Poor.

Ninety percent of sociology majors with the social work concentration will be expected to be rated at a level above average by their supervisor when completing their required internship.

**Results:**

PG 1: *Sociology maintained the threshold of 200 students and participated in all TTU-sponsored recruitment events.*

Year	Sociology	Sociology w/ a Sociology- Criminology- Criminal Justice Concentration	Sociology w/ a Social Work Concentration
2013	39	178	61
2014	30	165	72
2015	28	157	70
2016	33	129	92
2017	41	116	87
2018	28	139	73
2019	18	142	70

PG 2: *Offer both curricular and extracurricular options*

The annual Qualtrics survey of majors (that consistently demonstrates student satisfaction with curricular and co-curricular offerings) was not administered in spring 2020 due to the adverse impact on our students of an F4 tornado followed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The threshold of acceptability is to retain these curricular and co-curricular options for majors and to return to the student Qualtrics survey option from previous years.

*SLO 1: Develop knowledge of the discipline.*

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the ETS Major Field Examination in Sociology is defined as Tech students having a mean score no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. TTU students met this threshold.

ETS Major Field- Sociology Knowledge

Student Learning Outcome 1	Major Field Exam	
Spring 2020	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142.9	148.1
S.D.	9.7	12.4
N	29	8457
Fall 2019	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142.6	148.1
S.D.	11.9	12.3
N	18	8011
Fall 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	143	148.1
S.D.	10	12.4
N	31	7065
Spring 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.0
S.D.	9	12.8
N	34	7065
Fall2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.0
S.D.	8	12.8
N	33	6033
Spring2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	148.3	144
S.D.	12.4	11
N	39	4998
Fall 2016	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	142	148.3
S.D.	9	12.4
N	29	4,998

ETS Sub-scores:

	FY2020			
	N	TTU Mean	S.D.	National Mean
Core Sociology	43	43	11.9	48
Critical Thinking	43	42.5	9.7	47.5

General Education Pre/Post results from SOC:

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Pre Test Mean</u>	<u>Post Test Mean</u>	<u>Diff</u>	<u>Pre Test N</u>	<u>Post Test N</u>
FALL 2019	6	56.51	86.31	*29.8	28	18
FALL 2019	1	70.31	97.02	*26.71	86	90
FALL 2019	2	69.05	97.65	*28.60	84	73
FALL 2019	3	69.52	94.64	*25.12	30	20
FALL 2019	4	48.65	96.28	*47.63	29	24
FALL 2019	5	71.94	80.75	*8.93	28	23
FALL 2019	7	69.95	86.18	*16.23	29	23

*SLO 2: Develop critical thinking skills.*

Performance at a level above or comparable to the national mean on the critical thinking sub-score on the ETS Major Field Examination in Sociology is defined as TTU students having a mean score on critical thinking no lower than 1.644 standard errors below the national mean, the level at which a difference would become statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the department is able to assess our students' performance on Learning Outcome 2 as seen below:

Student learning Outcome 2	Critical Thinking	Critical Thinking
Spring 2020	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	42.8	47.5
S.D.	9.73	11.9
Fall 2019	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	42.4	47.5
S.D.	9.84	11.9
Fall 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	42	47.5
S.D.	9	12
Spring 2018	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	42	47.4
S.D.	8	7.2
Fall 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	41	47.5
S.D.	8	12.0
Spring 2017	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	43	47.6
S.D.	11	12.0
Fall 2016	TTU Data	National Data
Mean	43	47.8
S.D.	9	12

*SLO 3: Effective oral and written communication.*

The threshold of acceptability is improvement from the freshman year to the senior year in critical thinking skills on the NSSE data, and this threshold was met. *A continuous improvement strategy will be to expect 75% of full-time faculty in SOC moving forward to assign writing assignments that include critical thinking components. This will align with the current 100% of SOC full-time faculty.*

Responses are evaluated by TTU from these questions that address collaborative student research, teamwork, analytical research, research writing, exposure to diversity, faculty interaction, and cultural exposure, among others opportunities in preparation for professional development. Results from the Senior Questionnaire are compared with data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE was given spring

semesters 2016 and 2019 and the senior Sociology majors demonstrated gains over their freshmen counterparts in both years and on both the oral and written questions components. The NSSE assesses students' engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities, abilities to work as a team, communicate, and critically think. Relevant values from the NSSE are compared to data from the senior questionnaire. The combination of the NSSE exam as well as the writing and presentation requirements in many of our courses ensure the continued ability to monitor students' performance on Learning Outcomes 3.

We are pleased that the NSSE reflects gains in 2019 among the seniors and that Tech Sociology students score comparably to students in their Carnegie peer institutions.

		<i>Oral</i>		<i>Written</i>	
		Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors
2014	TTU Sociology	2.0	3.9	3.0	3.1
	TTU Total	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.8
	Carnegie	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.1
2016	TTU Sociology	2.9	3.0	2.7	3.3
	TTU Total	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.8
	Carnegie	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.1
2019	TTU Sociology	2.5	3.8	2.2	3.8
	TTU Total	2.6	2.9	2.3	2.9
	Carnegie	2.6	2.9	2.8	3.1
2020	TTU Sociology	3.3	2.6	3.3	2.9
	TTU Total	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.9
	Carnegie	2.7	3.0	2.8	3.0



*SLO 4: Prepared for Criminal Justice study and/or careers.*

In order to determine how well our students, perform on Learning Outcome 4, we administer a multiple-choice exam each fall and spring semester to seniors within the Sociology- Criminology-Criminal Justice concentration. Students are expected to answer 75% or more of the questions correctly. The exam, available on file in the departmental office, was developed by faculty in the department, and is administered during the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Major Field exam. By including this additional assessment, the faculty are able to regularly gauge whether our students are competent in the topics emphasized in the criminal justice concentration. Students met this threshold 100% of the time during the 2012-2016 review period. The Program Reviewer for 2017-2018 suggested revisions during this time to update for new material and the test will be administered again beginning in the 2020-21 academic year. The threshold of acceptability is 70% passage for the SOC-CRCJ In-House Exam and was met in fall 2019. The Exam was not administered online due to the pandemic in spring 2020.

Sociology CRCJ Exam Results:

Mean Percent Correct on Criminal Justice In-House Developed Exam

	Spring	Fall
2012	-	83.1
2013	82.19	83.1
2014	84.51	78.6
2015	82.5	80.63
2016	77.96	82.04
2017	76.94	Re-Design
2018	Re-Design	77.66
2019	-	74.29

*SLO 5: Successfully complete an internship.*

To assess our students' progress on Learning Outcome 5, we use the Internship Evaluation Form, completed by the Agency Supervisor to gauge students' overall performance on the internship requirements of the Social Work concentration. Student performance is rated and the final question is a scaled of one to five where students' work in the internship can be correlated to outstanding, good, average, fair or poor. This survey is evaluated in conjunction with the overall work completed by the Social Work Intern and the Journals completed. Ninety percent of Sociology-Social Work students were expected to be rated at a level above average (outstanding or good) by their supervisor at the completion of their required internship, and the Social-Work students have met this threshold almost every year during the evaluation period.

Internship Supervisor's Rating of Students in SW 4900 Internships:

Term	Number Enrolled	Number of Outstanding or Good
Spring 2020	22	22
Spring 2019	17	17
Fall 2018	17	17
Spring 2018	17	14
Fall 2017	23	23
Spring 2017	26	26
Fall 2016	25	25
Summer 2016	14	14
Spring 2016	14	13
Fall 2015	18	15
Summer 2015	11	11
Spring 2015	10	9

**Modifications for Improvement:**

*Student Learning Outcome 5*

Although students are meeting the threshold for supervisor's rating, discussion with site supervisors, students and faculty highlighted opportunities for both more student engagement and more Agency Site involvement. More specifically, ePortfolios were piloted in Spring 2019 and implemented again in the past academic year. Critical-thinking Assessment Test (CAT) results collected in Spring 2020 as part of the QEP project demonstrated that students made significant gains on critical thinking skills related to their ability to separate relevant from irrelevant sources of information.

As part of the ePortfolio experience, student complete the ePortfolio guide (Appendix 2). This guide is grade at the end of the semester and accounts for half of the internship grade. Also, Site Supervisors will begin providing additional feedback and contribute a 50-point assessment of the Intern's overall work.

Currently ePortfolios are featured both on the Provost homepage and as a component of Tech's Strategic Plan all based on the Sociology Internship Coordinator Shelley Brown's Model. ePortfolios are also being added student interns to take a virtual e-resume with them after their internship.

**Appendices**

1. Curriculum Map
2. SOC Internship Evaluation Form
3. ePortfolio Guide

**Appendix 1: Curriculum Map**

REQUIRED COURSES AND EXPERIENCES	LEARNING OUTCOMES - Sociology Majors			
	1-Demonstrate knowledge of their discipline at a level comparable to the national mean.	2-Demonstrate critical thinking skills at a level comparable to the national mean.	3-Be capable of effective oral and written communication.	4-Demonstrate proficiencies in the program concentration(s).
SOC 1010	X			
SOC 1020				
SOC 1650				
SW 1800				
SOC 2100				
SOC2630				
SOC/CJ 2660				
CJ 2700				
SOC 2840				
CJ 2850				
CJ 3000		X	X	
SOC 3100		X	X	X
SOC 3150		X	X	
SOC 3200		X	X	
SOC 3300		X	X	
SOC 3600		X	X	
CJ 3610		X	X	X
SOC/CJ 3620		X	X	
SOC/CJ 3640		X	X	
SOC/CJ 3650		X	X	X
SOC 3710		X	X	
SOC 3720		X	X	
SOC 3730		X	X	

SOC/SW 3900		X	X	X
SOC 3910		X	X	X
SOC/CJ 3911		X	X	
SOC 3920		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4010		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4040		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4050		X	X	
SOC 4080		X	X	
SOC 4090		X	X	
SW/CJ 4100		X	X	X
SOC 4120		X	X	
SW/CJ 4120		X	X	X
SOC 4210		X	X	
SOC 4220		X	X	
CJ 4250		X	X	
SOC 4320		X	X	
SOC 4330		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4350		X	X	
SOC 4430		X	X	
SOC 4500		X	X	
SOC 4510		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4515		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4520		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4530		X	X	
CJ 4540		X	X	
SOC 4610		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4660		X	X	X
CJ 4700		X	X	
SOC 4810		X	X	

SOC 4830		X	X	
SOC 4860		X	X	
SOC/CJ/SW 4900		X	X	X
SOC/CJ 4911		X	X	
SOC/CJ 4915		X	X	
SOC 4920		X	X	X
SOC/CJ 4925		X	X	
SOC 4930		X	X	X
SOC/CJ/SW 4940				
SOC/CJ 4948				
SOC/CJ/SW 4950				
SOC/CJ/SW 4970		X	X	
SOC/CJ/SW 4980		X	X	
SOC/CJ/SW 4990		X	X	
SOC 4999		X	X	

## Appendix 2: SOC Internship Evaluation Form

### TTU SOC Internship Evaluation Form

*Please remember that this is a learning experience for the student. Evaluation should reflect the quality of their work at your agency and also include areas needed for improvement. This evaluation is worth 50 points (½ of student final grade)*

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person evaluating student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Organization/Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### EVALUATION OF STUDENT - STUDENT WILL EARN 8 POINTS FOR EACH YES IN THIS SECTION TO DETERMINE GRADE

Student was punctual in arriving for assignment?

No     Yes    Explain:

Student was dependable in carrying out assignments and demonstrated professionalism at all times?

No     Yes    Explain:

Student was courteous and respectful to staff and clients?

No     Yes    Explain:

Student was inquisitive and showed initiative.

No     Yes    Explain:

Student seemed genuinely interested in learning?

No     Yes    Explain:

#### OVERALL PERFORMANCE - STUDENT WILL EARN UP TO 10 POINTS FOR THIS QUESTION TO DETERMINE GRADE

Please rate the student on his or her overall performance. Circle one:

(10) Excellent    (8) Good    (6) Average    (4) Below Average    (2) Poor

Comments:

#### OTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

Is there anything additional you would like to tell me about this student? ( you may use additional pages if needed)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Updated 12/10/19

## Appendix 3: ePortfolio Guide

# DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



## CHALLENGE

The internship is a crucial component of the curriculum that allows you to apply concepts, theories, and skills to real-world situations. The Department of Sociology and Political Science strives to make this experience as impactful and transferable as possible. As such, you are required to complete a culminating project for the internship.

Your challenge is to create a digital portfolio that highlights your professional development at the completion of your internship. The following pages will guide you through this process. Best of luck.

## TASKS

Your digital portfolio is comprised of five tasks that must be completed in order to receive an acceptable grade. The tasks do not necessarily have to be completed in this order, but you may find that this is a logical method.



### TASK 1: PLATFORM AND LAYOUT

You will select a platform to design your digital portfolio. You need to select a layout that is both professional and relevant.



### TASK 2: PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

You will need to have a professional photo taken to include in your digital portfolio. Dress appropriately.



### TASK 3: RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

You will create either a resume or a curriculum vitae, depending on your goals following graduation.



### TASK 4: ARTIFACTS

You will add artifacts from your classes or other relevant sources that demonstrate your professional potential.



### TASK 5: REFLECTION

You will write a reflective essay on your experiences at the completion of your internship.



# TASK 1: PLATFORM AND LAYOUT

## PLATFORM

The first task of creating your digital portfolio is to decide on a platform. This is the online tool that you will use during this project to create, present, and update your digital portfolio. You should keep in mind five aspects when selecting a platform:

- Ease of Use
- Customization
- Storage
- User Support
- Administrative Settings

The purpose of this section is to help you select a platform to meet the needs and goals of your digital portfolio by considering each of the five aspects mentioned above on three potential platforms.



## EASE OF USE

Ratings were determined by simplicity of design, level of intuitive use, and how accessible the platform is for new users.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	Has a simple drag-and-drop interface, but some find it slightly glitchy and think tool organization is less intuitive.
Wordpress	★★★★☆☆	Fairly easy to use. The page editor feels like a word processor, but content on the dashboard can be overwhelming to some.
Weebly	★★★★☆	Has a simple drag-and-drop interface, but some find this structure less flexible and harder to control.

## CUSTOMIZATION

Ratings were determined by the number of templates, fonts, colors, and overall features that allow users to develop their website in an effective way.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	Offers dozens of fonts, hundreds of templates, and a large color spectrum.
Wordpress	★★★★☆☆	Has many templates and fonts, but lacks significant personalization because of generic formatting.
Weebly	★★★★☆☆	Offers hundreds of fonts and templates, but its drag-and-drop interface lacks flexibility.



## STORAGE

Ratings were determined by how much room users have to upload content to the cloud-based storage within the platform without having to purchase more space.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	500 MB of storage without purchase. Also offers a gallery to view all personal documents that have been uploaded.
Wordpress	★★★★☆	3 GB of storage without purchase and a gallery feature to view documents that have been uploaded before.
Weebly	★★★★★	Unlimited storage for free. Documents must be re-uploaded each time they are used on the site.

## USER SUPPORT

Ratings were determined by the amount of technical help available within the platform (e.g., FAQs, forums, live chats, and tutorials) and by the help content's clarity and ease of use.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★★	Has large FAQs and public forum sections. Offers interactive video tutorials. Can call or submit a ticket for support.
Wordpress	★★★★☆	Has an extensive support forum which is updated constantly by users and administrators.
Weebly	★★★★★	Has a large forum and on-hand support team. Includes a steps-to-publish checklist during website creation.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SETTINGS

Ratings were determined by the types of privacy settings, search engine optimization, and sharing capabilities.

Platform	Rating	Comments
Wix	★★★★☆	Has the ability to set up different levels of privacy, including free password protection.
Wordpress	★★★★☆	Can set up different levels of privacy and password protection. Includes advertisements unless the premium version.
Weebly	★★★★☆	Has the ability to set up different levels of privacy. Must purchase the pro version for password protection.

### YOUR TURN!

Which aspects are most important for you when selecting a platform?

Which platform will you use to create your digital portfolio?

# LAYOUT

After you have selected the platform you will be using for your digital portfolio, it is now time to select the layout. This is how your audience will interact with your digital portfolio, so it is crucial that the layout is user-friendly and professional. The purpose of this section is to guide you through selecting a layout that communicates your message by considering the producer, the consumer, and the design. Your digital portfolio should have the following sections:

- About Me + Professional Photo
- Resume / Curriculum Vitae
- Artifacts
- Reflection
- Contact Information

Of course, there is some flexibility for the layout of your digital portfolio. Just be sure to include the required content. You have the creative liberties to make this project your own.



## THE PRODUCER (YOU)

You are the producer of your digital portfolio. This means that you are telling your story. The About Me section is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself and highlight the connections between your knowledge, skills, and experiences. Make sure your biographical information is relevant and professional. Keep the About Me section clear and concise. Do not overwhelm your audience with unnecessary details.

### YOUR TURN!

What biographical information is important to your audience? Consider discussing your major, interests, or future plans. Remember to only include relevant information.

Which knowledge, skills, and experiences would you like to highlight? How will you guide your audience to other parts of your digital portfolio?

## THE CONSUMER (EMPLOYERS / GRADUATE PROGRAMS)

Employers and graduate programs are the consumers of your digital portfolio. This means that they are interested in learning more about you and your potential for impact within their institutions. While this is not a section of the digital portfolio, it is imperative for you to spend from time considering the target audience who will be consuming the finished product.

### YOUR TURN!

Briefly describe your professional goals. What do you hope to accomplish before graduation? After graduation?

Using your previous response as a guide, who is your target audience?

What knowledge, skills, and experiences are important to your audience? What concepts or words/phrases should you include in your digital portfolio to appeal to your audience?



## THE DESIGN (CONNECTION OF PRODUCER AND CONSUMER)

You should consider how design elements serve to connect the producer of the digital portfolio with the consumer of the digital portfolio. Design elements in your digital portfolio include color, font, space, and flow. You will also want to include non-text elements such as boxes, icons, buttons, and images. As with any professional website, your digital portfolio should be functional and aesthetically pleasing. Evaluate these four design principles:

- **Contrast:** If two items are not exactly the same, make them very different. In general, high contrast provides more emphasis while low contrast provides less emphasis.
- **Repetition:** Repeat some aspect of design throughout the entire page or digital portfolio. Repetition creates consistency and helps the reader follow along.
- **Alignment:** Everything on the page should have a visual connection with something else. Align items to give the page coherence. Do not place anything arbitrarily on the page.
- **Proximity:** Group related items close to each other and space unrelated items far apart. Related items are seen as one cohesive group rather than a bunch of unrelated parts.

# TASK 2: PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

## PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

The second task of creating your digital portfolio is to have a professional photo taken of yourself. Your digital portfolio is a mode of communication that highlights your professional development. Thus, the professional photo plays a central role in demonstrating your potential. It also simply adds a face to your digital portfolio, which makes it seem more humanized. The purpose of this section is to help you make decisions about the professional photo for your digital portfolio by considering the following factors:



### COST

How much are you able to spend on your professional photo? It does not have to be expensive. Always shop around for the best deal.

### CONTENT

What in the photo contributes to a professional message? You should dress appropriately and should be the only subject. It needs to be a fairly recent photo, too.

### QUALITY

Does the photo meet standards necessary for a website? It should not be blurry or pixelated.

### QUANTITY

How many photos do you want to include in your digital portfolio. Only one is required. This will effect the cost.

Model 1



Model 2



Model 3



While each model photo is a little different, they share several common characteristics, including high quality and single subject. Be sure that your professional photo captures not only who you are as an individual but who you can be at a particular institution (employer/graduate program).

## YOUR TURN!

Indicate whether or not the photo should be considered for a digital portfolio.



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No

# TASK 3: RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

## RESUME / CURRICULUM VITAE

The third task of creating your digital portfolio is to design either a resume or a curriculum vitae (CV). While the resume and CV provide details about your professional history and skills, you might think of them as ways to tell your story to possible employers and/or graduate programs using clear and concise language. The purpose of this section is to help you make decisions about the structure and content of your resume or CV, depending on the audience. As a general rule, a resume is generally better for employers while a CV is generally better for graduate programs. Again, it is important to know your audience and their expectations.



### A TYPICAL RESUME

- **Name and Contact Information:** Your residential address might be most appropriate, especially if you do not want your current employer to know that you are looking for another job!
- **Education:** A listing of your degrees or certifications and educational institutions or programs.
- **Work Experience:** Names of the companies or organizations that you have worked for, the location of each company, the dates worked, your job title, and duties performed.

### A TYPICAL CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name and Contact Information:** Contact information for your current institution or place of employment may work best, unless you do not want your colleagues to know that you are job-hunting.

**Areas of interest:** A listing of your varied academic interests.

**Education:** A list of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation. You may also include the titles of your dissertation or thesis here.

**Grants, Honors, and Awards:** A list of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service.

**Publications and Presentations:** A list of your published articles and books, as well presentations given at conferences. If there are many of both, you might consider having one section for publications and another for presentations.

**Employment and Experience:** This section may include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences.

**Scholarly or Professional Memberships:** A listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member. If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section.

**References:** A list of persons who write letters of recommendations for you, which includes their contact information.



# TASK 4: ARTIFACTS

## ARTIFACTS

The fourth task of creating your digital portfolio is to select and add artifacts. Artifacts are documents and media that you include in your digital portfolio. They act as evidence of your knowledge, skills, and experiences. As you gather artifacts for your digital portfolio, remember to display relevant evidence and include a variety of artifacts. The purpose of this section is to offer suggestions for artifacts, which might be collected from the following sources:

- Courses
- Internships
- Research
- Service Learning
- Leadership Positions
- Study Abroad



## LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Paper or Essay
- Presentation
- Grant Proposal
- Research Poster
- Lab Report

## TEACHING EXPERIENCES

- Syllabus
- Lesson Plan
- Activities and Assessments
- Recorded Sessions
- Teaching Philosophy

## SKILLS, WORKSHOPS, CERTIFICATIONS, AWARDS,

- CPR/AED
- Foreign Language
- SPSS, NVivo, Qualtrics
- Honor Societies
- Press Releases

## INTERNSHIP, WORK, SERVICE LEARNING, STUDY ABROAD

- Products from Collaborative or Individual Projects
- Flyers or Brochures
- Blogs, Photos, or Videos
- Leadership/Service Philosophy



When selecting artifacts for your digital portfolio, remember the consumer. Ask yourself: Who will be interacting with your digital portfolio? The answer will impact what you include in your digital portfolio and what you exclude in your digital portfolio. The following exercise can guide you through this.

## YOUR TURN!

As you consider the artifacts that you are going to include in your digital portfolio, it is also important that you think about their overall purpose and contribution to your digital portfolio as a whole. Remember, artifacts are the evidence of your skills and experiences. For example, a study abroad program is not an artifact, but the journal you kept for class while you were abroad is an artifact.

**Artifact**

**Purpose**



# TASK 5: REFLECTION

## REFLECTION

The fifth task of creating your digital portfolio is to reflect on your internship. Reflection is a significant component of the experience, as it is your opportunity to connect what you learned to the bigger picture of your academic and professional journey. You will write a reflective essay on your experiences at the completion of your internship.

A good way to think about reflection is by asking yourself: **What? So what? Now what?** Below are a set of questions to consider when processing the experiences from your internship.



## QUESTIONS

- What were your expectations before you started the internship?
- What knowledge of your field was most important?
- In what ways were you able to apply what you have learned in your academic coursework to your internship?
- How might you apply what you learned during your internship to your academic coursework?
- What transferable skills did you develop through your experience?
- Have you identified any skills or areas that you would like to further develop?
- What pushed you outside of your comfort zone? What was the biggest challenge you encountered?
- What new ideas or questions were raised as a result of this experience?
- What was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- What was your greatest accomplishment or reward?
- In light of this internship experience, how have your personal goals evolved?

## YOUR TURN!

One of the best ways to show a potential employer or graduate school how qualified you are for a position is to talk about your successes in past internships, jobs, or activities. In thinking about your internship, mark the skills you gained or improved through your internship.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking initiative                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting deadlines           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working under pressure                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing to a work team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing data and statistics             | <input type="checkbox"/> Coming up with ideas        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating well with staff and clients | <input type="checkbox"/> Following through on plans  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering a presentation                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Being accurate and detailed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being persuasive                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing articles or reports |

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## ETHICS

As you develop your digital portfolio, it is important for you to keep in mind some ethical aspects of the project. In other words, you will be making choices and taking actions that could impact yourself and others. The public nature of the Internet often raises questions about what media to include and how to give appropriate credit. Any time you use the work of others — such as images, videos, and music — you must be aware of copyright, fair use, permission, attribution, and representation. Although such concepts can be complex, working within these parameters is an essential component of creating your digital portfolio.

Creative Commons is the most popular database for images, videos, and music. Remember, even if you use these databases, you will probably still need to credit the artist.

- [search.creativecommons.org](https://search.creativecommons.org)
- [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)
- [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

**Given the potentially vulnerable nature of the populations you will be working with during your internship, it is inappropriate to use pictures or videos of them in your digital portfolio. If you want to include photos, it is recommended to use the data bases listed above. These tend to be free for non-commercial use.**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to the Office of Creative Inquiry for providing the funds and staff to create and print this guide. In particular, this guide was made possible by the QEP Curriculum Grant. It will undoubtedly be a resource for students that will have major impact as their transition to employees and/or graduate students.

Much of the content used in this guide was adapted from the Office of University Writing at Auburn University.

The photos used in this guide were taken either from the Office of Communications and Marketing at Tennessee Tech University or from Pexels.com for no cost.

