

Building a Portfolio

Creating your Professional Identity and Highlighting your Strengths

Creating a portfolio allows you to showcase your career objectives, experience, and talents. It allows you to be more than a one page resume. Start building a portfolio by defining your goal for the portfolio; do you want it to say “hire me” or do you want to use it for networking, building a reputation, or something else? Know this before you get started.

Key Elements of an Online Portfolio:

- ⇒ Objective or Mission Statement that indicates what you are about, who you are, what type of career or position you are seeking. Know your audience and target this market with this statement.
- ⇒ Themes or organizing categories that help you group your experience, knowledge, and interests. What themes you choose are based on your goals & audience.
 - * Qualifications such as leadership, team player, direct services, etc.



- * Skill areas such as research & data analysis, written & oral communication, problem solving ability, etc.
- * Principles such as social justice, building inclusive communities, or empowering people to make healthier choices, etc.

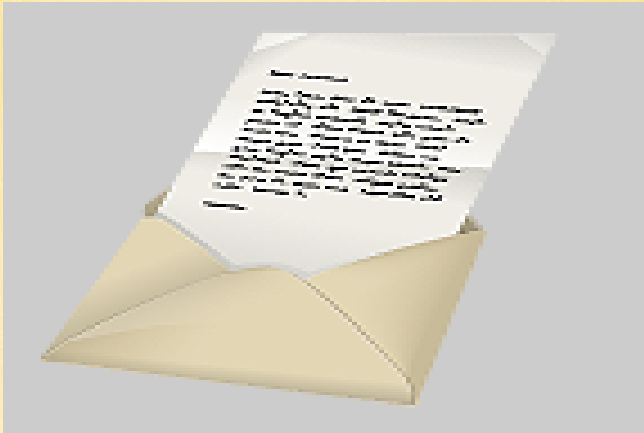
⇒ An “about” or “hire me” page where people can get your contact information, you can post your resume or other critical items

Tips for Designing your Portfolio

- **Clarity and Focus:** Keep it short and to the point, avoid cramming too much information in; keep it simple and organized...*less is more*.
- **Make navigation easy:** balance between depth and breadth, make headings easy to follow, consider layout of each page to make visual skimming easy.
- **Tell a story:** Have a narrative arc to your portfolio and make sure you are telling a story your audience wants to hear. Provide adequate documentation and explanations, but limit it to your best work. Keep it positive (use up language) and edit well.
- **Be creative:** Infuse the portfolio with your personality, but avoid visual clutter. Look at examples online to find what fits for you.

As a student in the Minnesota system, you have access to efolio for free. There are also several other sites online you can consider.

Have you met with your advisor recently? Remember, advisors are there to help you develop your identity as a sociologist, think about when and where you should apply for internships and jobs, and can help you articulate your skill set. Take advantage of the resources the program offers you. Also, check out the career service workshops and services. At no other time in your life will you have access to so many people who want to see you succeed.



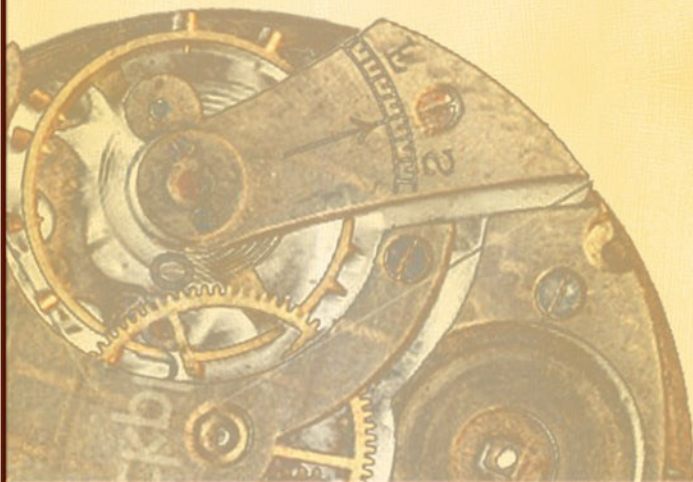
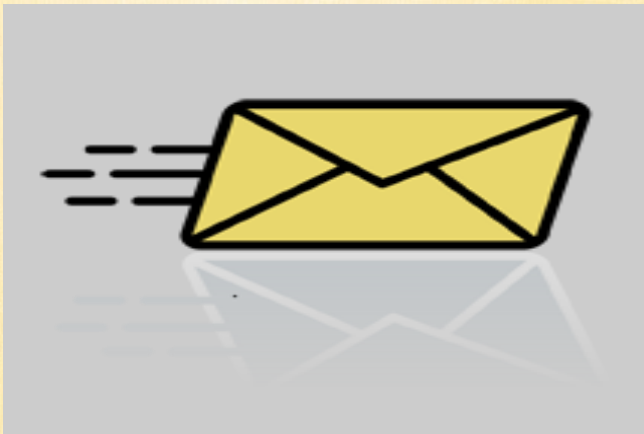
Letters of Recommendation Common Questions Answered

Who do I ask? Ask your advisor, a professor you worked closely with, a professor who has seen you grow or has seen your best work, an advisor of a student organization you led, or your boss at work, supervisor at your internship, or supervisor at a volunteer site you worked at. The best letters come from those who know you the best.

When do I ask? The best time to ask is while you still have contact with the person you think would write a good letter. The person can always write a basic letter and keep it in their records for when you apply to a program or job.

What should I provide? If you are applying for a specific job or program, provide your letter writer with as much information on the job or program and as many details as you feel are relevant for them to write a good letter. Remind them of how long they've known you, what classes you took with them and grades received, what projects/papers you worked on, and any information you want them to highlight that they may not know (such as how you worked full time while attending school or anything else you think is relevant). Also provide any forms, with your information filled out, and SASE.

Final Tip: Make sure deadlines are clear. If you haven't heard from the person a few days prior to the deadline, send a friendly reminder; Faculty and supervisors are often buried in paperwork. They often miss dates, so friendly reminders are welcome. It is our work, but it is your future.



*Think not of yourself as the architect of your career but as the sculptor.
Expect to have to do a lot of hard hammering and chiseling and scraping and polishing.
BC Formbes*