Appendix 1: AeP2 Toolkit — a series of six concept guides

The following resources were developed during the life of this project:

- ePortfolio concepts for learners
- ePortfolio concepts for academic staff
- ePortfolio concepts for information technology & teaching and learning support staff
- ePortfolio concepts for institutional managers
- ePortfolio concepts for employers, professional bodies and careers services
- ePortfolio concepts for staff/employees
ePortfolio concepts
for learners

‘After writing just one experience according to the ‘formula’ suggested by the ePortfolio team, I could notice a change in my thinking. I was learning to consider my experiences from an employer’s perspective and to identify – in all facets of my life – examples of skills that employers would value.’

— Postgraduate student, QUT
ePortfolios are becoming popular with students around the world as a tool to enhance learning and assist with personal career development. As a learner, you might be wondering how you can use an ePortfolio to support your learning. This guide will introduce you to ePortfolios, their benefits, and issues you need to consider when developing your own ePortfolio.

**What is an ePortfolio?**
This guide uses the term ‘ePortfolio’ to refer to an electronically stored collection (or archive) of a student’s experiences, achievements and artefacts, together with their reflections on learning.

**Why use an ePortfolio?**
ePortfolios can be customised and personalised into a one-stop-shop to demonstrate your skills and experiences to teachers, peers and employers. Many students find their ePortfolio to be a valuable resource when it comes to writing job applications and preparing for interviews. Students who have used ePortfolios report having a greater awareness of their skills, greater confidence in their abilities, and feeling more independent as a learner.

In the academic context, an ePortfolio can assist you with your personal development by providing a single, organised repository from which you may:

- Develop an holistic overview of your learning/experiences/development beyond individual subjects/classes.
- Understand your learning and experience in terms of graduate attributes and employability skills.
- Extract evidence to represent your learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses.
- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on your ePortfolio content.
- Plan, set and review personal development targets.

An ePortfolio is not only a product, but more importantly a process, which can help you to better understand not just what you have learned, but how you have learned. As you reflect on your learning to create your ePortfolio, you will also develop important lifelong learning abilities that complement your technical knowledge and skills.

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"It was only when I came to write about my experiences that the really great value of the ePortfolio became apparent. My confidence in myself as a valuable future employee increased dramatically!... And when it came to applying for jobs, I could readily draw together evidence from a wide variety of areas to demonstrate my competence... I believe that this confidence and maturity was evident in both my written applications and interviews, and helped me to secure a professional job prior to graduation.”

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Postgraduate student, QUT
What do I need to think about with regards to creating and maintaining an ePortfolio?

What is my main reason for creating an ePortfolio?
Your reasons for creating the ePortfolio will guide you as to what evidence to include:
- To help me address job applications
- To showcase my skills and experiences to potential employers or professional organisations
- To demonstrate the attainment of professional standards
  - Refer to the employability skills required by your industry (available from job advertisements, industry associations or career advisory services), and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them.
- To help me plan my personal development and develop life-long learning skills
  - Refer to the graduate attributes identified as important by your institution, and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them. Identify which of the graduate attributes you don’t have much evidence for. Consider what training or experiences you require to be able to develop those skills.
- Use your ePortfolio to look for patterns in your learning. Are there certain types of experiences or assessment items from which you seem to learn more from? Aim to structure future learning opportunities around those type of experiences.
- To help me transition from university to work, or between learning institutions
- To support my application for the recognition of prior learning (RPL)
  - After you have entered a range of experiences, sit back and reflect on which graduate attribute or employability skill each entry represents. You will probably find that each entry can be used to demonstrate more than one skill or attribute.

How do I go about creating an entry in my ePortfolio?
To get the most out of your ePortfolio, you need to do more than simply add examples of your work. Each time you add a piece of evidence, you need to provide a brief context for the piece - why are you adding it? What does it display? What do you want your audience to know about that piece of work?

One useful method to help you provide a succinct context is called the STAR-L framework. Stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result and lessons Learnt. The STAR-L helps you to structure your reflections about an experience in such a way that the meaning and outcome of the experience can be clearly identified and communicated to others.

- Situation - the context in which the experience occurred.
- Task - what was actually required of you in the situation.
- Action - the steps that you personally took in response to the task. When reflecting on your actions, ask yourself why you chose to respond in that particular way.
- Result - the outcome of your actions. How did your actions contribute to the completion of the task? How did your actions affect the final outcome of the situation?
- Learnt - the things you have learned from the experience. Highlight any skills or abilities that you have developed or improved as a result of the experience. Think about how you might apply what you’ve learned to other situations.

How will I ensure my ePortfolio is kept up to date?
To ensure your ePortfolio gives you the greatest benefit, keep your information up-to-date. Think about how you are going to achieve this:
- Set aside half an hour every Friday to add that week’s achievements to your ePortfolio.
- After a major event (e.g. seminar, lecture, assignment, performance), take time to reflect on your experience and add an entry about it to your ePortfolio.
- At the end of each month, spend an hour browsing through your ePortfolio. Consider whether there are any new experiences or artefacts you could add to it as evidence of your learning or skills.

Who will have access to my ePortfolio?
It is important whenever you add information to the Web to remember that it is a public space. While all ePortfolio systems provide privacy controls, it is essential that you understand exactly who can access your ePortfolio.
You will probably be able to customise your ePortfolio for different audiences, for example by selecting some experiences/ artefacts for your teacher to be able to see whilst keeping other experiences for your eyes only. Check your institution’s ePortfolio guides to make sure you understand how this works.

What sort of experiences and artefacts should I include in my ePortfolio?
Think broadly when selecting experiences to include in your ePortfolio. You can include evidence of skills you have gained at university, in volunteer roles or in your personal life. Some examples might include:
- Assessment pieces you performed well in during your university degree
- Roles or achievements in part time jobs or voluntary work
- Awards you have won at university, work, or in your personal life
Whatever you include should provide clear evidence of a particular skill or attribute that you possess.

What will happen to my ePortfolio in the long term?
In many cases, institutions will continue to provide former students with access to ePortfolios after graduation. Check your institution’s ePortfolio policy to find out whether this is possible.
Alternatively, you may be able to transfer your material between different ePortfolio systems, such as that of your employer, a different educational institution, or professional association.
Finally, it is important to know whether there is a point at which your ePortfolio will be deleted by the institution storing it. For example, it is inactive for a certain period of time.
Remember
you are not alone! Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to your own perspective and context!

Need more information?
Visit www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au
- ePortfolio concepts for academic staff
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Further reading

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Australian ePortfolio Project
www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au
February 2009

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‘I’m really excited by the notion of ePortfolios. I really like the idea of making it available to students and staff, whether for the recognition of prior learning process or for the purpose of linking it to their employability skills.’

— AeP focus group participant (2007)
The use of ePortfolios in education can involve a range of stakeholders: beyond the students themselves and the teaching staff, there may be learning designers, academic developers, ICT managers and policy makers. The audience for an ePortfolio might also include employers and members of professional bodies. This is one of a series of concept guides aimed at these diverse stakeholder groups.

With the growing use of eLearning in universities and colleges, many teachers want to increase their understanding of ePortfolio-based learning. Have you considered how you can develop student-centred learning activities to enhance the quality and sustainability of learning outcomes?

What is an ‘ePortfolio’?
This guide uses the term ‘ePortfolio’ to refer to an electronically stored collection (or archive) of a student’s experiences, achievements and artefacts, together with their reflections on learning.

Why use an ePortfolio?
There are many different potential purposes for ePortfolios, so you need to be clear about the reasons why you want to introduce ePortfolio-based learning activities into the curriculum.

In the academic context, an ePortfolio may assist learners with their personal development by providing a single, organised repository from which they may:

- Develop an holistic overview of their learning/experiences-development beyond individual subjects/classes.
- Understand their learning and experience in terms of graduate attributes and employability skills.
- Extract evidence to represent their learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses.

- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on their ePortfolio content.
- Plan and set personal development targets.

ePortfolios can assist you, as a teacher, to gain deeper, more rounded insights into your students, enabling the provision of rich individualised academic advice.

What teaching approaches are ePortfolios best suited to?
An ePortfolio is not only a product, but more importantly is also a process, allowing students to move beyond what they have learned to consider how they have learned, and to understand the conceptual connections inherent in the creative process of learning. When they develop their ePortfolio, students may build their understanding of the linkages between assessment and learning, with the focus changing from assessment of learning to assessment for learning.

Constructivist practices such as self-reflection underpin ePortfolio practice, which can help increase student engagement with the learning process itself and, in turn, develop lifelong learning abilities that augment the acquisition of specific disciplinary knowledge and skills.

What do you need to think about when introducing ePortfolio-based learning into your teaching?

The following questions have been compiled to help you to clarify your specific needs with regard to using ePortfolios:

**Teaching philosophy**
- Do I believe in student-centred learning?
- Am I concerned about quality learning outcomes that focus on the development of the student as a whole person?
- Do I think about the contribution I am making to students building the skills they need to gain employment in a dynamic, changing world?

**Pedagogies**
- Does ePortfolio use, with its emphasis on reflective practice and constructivist learning, suit my usual teaching approaches?
- Would professional development in alternative pedagogical approaches help me to implement ePortfolio in my teaching?
- Will the introduction of ePortfolio learning require program redesign?

**Curriculum**
- What learning outcomes do I wish my students to have?
- What are the learning goals for my subject?
- Can ePortfolios really assist in the achievement of these learning goals? (ePortfolios may not necessarily be appropriate in every academic context?)
- How are ePortfolios currently being used in my faculty/school/academic program?

**Tools for learning**
- How can ePortfolios be incorporated as a useful learning activity in my subject?
- How can ePortfolios assist with assessment in my subject?
- How can I motivate my students to fully engage with the ePortfolio process?
  - External motivation, e.g., the ePortfolio is a mandatory part of assessment?
  - Internal motivation, e.g., students see the relevance of the ePortfolio to their personal development?
  - Modelling, e.g., students see that I also have my own ePortfolio.
- What additional training or resources will my students require to successfully engage with the ePortfolio?
  - Reflective practice training?
  - Technical (ICT) training?
  - In-class access to computers?
  - Increased student Internet access limits?

**Resourcing and support**
- Do I have the time and energy required to adequately support ePortfolio implementation in my subject?
- What support is available to help me implement ePortfolios in my teaching?
  - Learning design assistance from teaching and learning support services?
  - Technical (ICT) support?
  - Management and administrative support?
  - Pedagogical support, e.g., academic peers, Teaching and Learning support services, a community of practice?
- Can my Careers and Employment office assist with marketing the potential of ePortfolios to students?
- What professional groups/networks/collaborations are available to support my use of ePortfolios, e.g., drawing on institutional, national or international relationships?
- Do I think I would benefit from professional development/training to enable me to effectively implement ePortfolios in my teaching?

**Commitment**
- How might my research and/or practice in ePortfolio use contribute to my own professional development?
- Can I identify an ‘ePortfolio champion’ who will support innovative practice?
Remember

you are not alone! Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to your own perspective and context!

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Further reading

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Australian ePortfolio Project
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February 2009
ePortfolio concepts
for information technology and teaching and learning support staff

‘ePortfolio provides a dynamic learning environment for students to document and reflect on relational outcomes of their learning. Often assessment tasks and their criteria focus on the... products of their learning [and] fail to capture and emphasise the learning that occurs through... engaging in authentic tasks.’

— Jude Smith, Learning and Teaching Consultant, Creative Industries Faculty, QUT
The use of ePortfolios in education can involve a range of stakeholders: beyond the students themselves and the teaching staff, there may be learning designers, academic developers, ICT managers and policy makers. The audience for an ePortfolio might also include employers and members of professional bodies. This is one of a series of guides aimed at these diverse stakeholder groups.

As a member of the information technology or teaching and learning support staff, you might be considering how you can assist teachers to develop student-centred learning activities to enhance the quality and sustainability of learning outcomes. With the growing use of eLearning in universities and colleges, many teachers want to increase their understanding of ePortfolio-based learning.

What is an ePortfolio?
This guide uses the term ‘ePortfolio’ to refer to an electronically stored collection (or archive) of a student’s experiences, achievements and artefacts, together with their reflections on learning.

Why develop an ePortfolio system?
There are many different potential purposes for ePortfolios, so you need to be clear about the reasons that your institution, or perhaps a specific teacher, wants to introduce ePortfolio based learning activities into the curriculum. ePortfolios can support a range of activities, including study or employment applications, transition between different life stages, assessment of professional standards or providing evidence of continuing professional development.

In the academic context, an ePortfolio may assist learners with their personal development by providing a single, organised repository from which they may:
- Develop an holistic overview of their learning/experiences/development beyond individual subjects/classes
- Understand their learning and experience in terms of graduate attributes and employability skills
- Extract evidence to represent their learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses
- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on their ePortfolio content
- Plan and set their own personal development targets.

ePortfolios can also assist teachers to gain deeper, more rounded insights into their students, enabling the provision of rich individualised academic advice.

What teaching approaches are ePortfolios best suited to?
An ePortfolio is not only a product, but more importantly also a process, allowing students to move beyond what they have learned to consider how they have learned, and to understand the conceptual connections inherent in the creative process of learning. When they develop their ePortfolio, students may build their understanding of the linkages between assessment and learning, with the focus changing from assessment of learning to assessment for learning.

Constructivist practices such as self-reflection underpin ePortfolio practice, which can help increase student engagement with the learning process itself, and in turn develop lifelong learning abilities that augment the acquisition of specific disciplinary knowledge and skills.
What do you need to think about when supporting teachers or institutional managers to introduce ePortfolio-based learning?

The following questions have been compiled to help you to clarify the specific needs of the teaching staff or institutional managers with regard to utilising ePortfolios.

**Scoping and purpose**
- Who do we envision will use ePortfolios (undergraduates, postgraduates, alumni, staff)?
- What stage are they at in their education or employment?
- How might ePortfolios prepare them for their next stages of learning?
- What do we see as the main purposes of ePortfolios for our learners?
  - to support formal academic learning
  - to support overall development (including personal and career areas, and experiences/learning from non-academic contexts)
  - to develop the capacity for lifelong learning
  - to support formative assessment
  - to provide an assessment management tool, for formal summative assessment
  - to create a presentation portfolio to showcase achievements
  - to support transition between different learning environments.

**Teaching and Learning quality and outcomes**
- What is the level of interest and engagement in ePortfolio learning in the institution/faculties/schools and amongst individual academic staff?
- What learning and teaching outcomes do we aim to achieve through the use of ePortfolios?
- How will ePortfolio activities be evaluated to ensure identified learning outcomes are being achieved?
- What pedagogical/andragogical approaches are appropriate to be incorporated into both the ePortfolio systems and associated training activities?
- What ongoing professional development will academic and support staff require?

**Learner help and support**
- What guidance to support learners is important in our context to include online or alongside the ePortfolio system?
  - Guidance to learners on the purpose(s) of the system?
  - Guidance to learners on how to use the system?
  - A tutorial programme to support the ePortfolio process?
  - Online tutor or mentor support for feedback to learners?
  - Diagnostic tools to assist with self-assessment, or educational or career planning?
  - Guidance and warnings about the risks associated with sharing personal information via the Web?
  - ICT support for learners?

**Teacher help and support**
- Are we likely to encounter resistance to change among academics who wish to focus primarily on their teaching and research in a particular discipline?
- What professional development activities need to be developed for teachers to enable them to use the ePortfolio system?
- What form should ongoing technical support take?

**Information management**
- Will learners need to:
  - enter, edit and save text?
  - include a range of materials (eg CV, reflections, skills, achievements, goals and plans)?
  - upload files as evidence of learning and/or competency (qualifications, certificates, other digital files such as images, audio, video)?
  - hyperlink to files as evidence?
  - export files?
  - create their own web page templates?
  - see all their data, with a list of uploaded and linked files?
  - view or link to their academic transcript or official records?
- What types of information will be managed by a learner, and what will be processed for the purposes of the institution?
  - Are there privacy implications associated with this?
- What information is owned and managed by the institution?
  - Academic transcript – will a learner be able to view and link to transcript as authenticated evidence of achievement both during and after their period of study?
  - How will security and authentication of transcript information be assured and maintained?
  - How will the ePortfolio interoperate with our existing learning management and student management systems?
Information management cont.

- What information might be managed or processed collaboratively e.g., by more than one learner, or by more than one organisation?
  - Collaborative work involving other people’s personal data
  - Work undertaken with another organisation, e.g., work experience placement
- What are the implications of shared information?
  - Does the ePortfolio system have suitable prompts about the use of other people’s data, or other people’s copyrighted material, at the point of incorporation?
  - Who has an interest, an obligation, a right with respect to this data? What is the interest, obligation, right?

Legal considerations and privacy issues

- Who owns the ePortfolio?
- How do we accommodate our privacy and intellectual property (IP) obligations under the relevant legislation, and under our institutional policies?
- Will a learner be able to view relevant institutional privacy and IP policies from within the ePortfolio system?
- Who will have permission to view all or part of a learner’s ePortfolio?
- Who will set permissions for sharing learner information (learner/school/faculty/institution)?
- How long may/must data be stored after learner leaves the institution? What are the institutional obligations of stewardship?

Evaluation

- How might we evaluate our ePortfolio practice?
  - Level of use by learners?
  - Uptake across the institution?
  - Impact on learners?
  - Impact on staff?
  - Acceptance/uptake by employer/professional bodies?

Accessibility/usability

- Does the system enable use by people with disabilities?
- Does the ePortfolio system comply with our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and associated Disability Standards for Education 2005?
- Is accessibility via a keyboard (instead of a pointing device) available to a learner?
- Can each learner select preference settings for screen display – font style, size, colours of font and background, which are stored and automatically applied at log-in?

Storage capacity and storage duration

- How much space will be allocated to each learner’s records and digital files?
- How long will a learner’s records be retained, so they may reflect back on progress between ‘then’ and ‘now’?
- What process will accompany deletion of ePortfolios, e.g., learner initiated deletion or system initiated deletion of inactive ePortfolios?

Technical standards and interoperability

- To what extent do we want our ePortfolio system to be compatible with those offered by associated sectors (other institutions, VET, schools)?
- What do we need to consider with regard to interoperability between systems?
Remember
You are not alone! Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to their own perspective and context.

Need more information?
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February 2009
ePortfolio concepts
for institutional managers

‘The need for an integrated student experience has been recognised for some time, along with the need to address the concerns of employers and professional associations regarding the adequate preparation of graduates for the workplace. ePortfolio provides a tool which supports the integration of the student experience across courses of study and the transition to employment.’

— Professor Tom Cochrane, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Technology, Information and Learning Support, QUT
The use of ePortfolios in education can involve a range of stakeholders: beyond the students themselves and the teaching staff, there may be learning designers, academic developers, ICT managers and policy makers. The audience for an ePortfolio might also include employers and members of professional bodies. This is one of a series of guides aimed at these diverse stakeholder groups.

As an institutional manager, you might be considering how you can utilise ePortfolio systems and processes to enhance the quality and sustainability of learning outcomes for learners and/or teachers in your institution.

What is an ePortfolio?
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Why use an ePortfolio?
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In the academic context, an ePortfolio may assist both learners and teachers with their personal development by providing a single, organised repository from which they may:

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- Extract evidence to represent their learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses
- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on their ePortfolio content
- Plan and set their own personal development targets.

ePortfolios can also assist teachers to gain deeper, more rounded insights into their students, enabling the provision of rich individualised academic advice.

What do we need to think about when introducing an ePortfolio system at our institution?

The following questions have been compiled to help you to clarify your institution’s specific needs with regard to implementing an ePortfolio system.

Scoping and purpose
- Who do we envision will use ePortfolios (undergraduates, postgraduates, alumni, staff)?
- What stage are they at in their education or employment?
- How might ePortfolios prepare them for their next stages of learning?
- What do we see as the main purposes of ePortfolios for our learners?
  - to support formal academic learning
  - to support overall development (including personal and career areas, and experience/learning from non-academic contexts)
  - to develop the capacity for lifelong learning
  - to support formative assessment
  - to provide an assessment management tool for formal summative assessment
  - to create a presentation portfolio to showcase achievements
  - to support transition between different learning environments

Institutional culture
- Do the mission and values of our institution encourage innovation?
- Do the mission and values foster a culture of student-centred learning?

Strategic direction
- To what extent do we want our ePortfolio system to be compatible with those offered by associated sectors (other institutions, VET, schools)?
- How will we maintain relationships with other institutions using ePortfolio, to ensure collaboration and cooperation?
- With which national and international bodies do we need to develop relationships regarding ePortfolio research and practice?
- Is our institution’s long-term strategic planning flexible enough to enable uptake of new technologies which frequently emerge in much shorter timespans?
- Do we need to encourage a whole-of-institution approach to ePortfolio practice to ensure consistency?
- How can we ensure consultation between faculties, teaching and learning centres and IT departments in the development and implementation of an ePortfolio system?
- To what degrees do we want an ePortfolio platform to be integrated with our other enterprise systems (eg. learning management system, student management system)?

Institutional policy
- Does ownership of the ePortfolio lie with the learner or the institution? How can we reflect this in our institutional polices and culture?
- Will ePortfolios be portable, enabling learners to take their ePortfolio with them when they move between institutions?
- What national or international standards should we adopt to enable long term portability and interoperability of ePortfolios?
- How will we ensure individual ePortfolios can be maintained in the long term, eg. throughout multiple software and storage upgrades?
- What are the implications of ePortfolio for our existing institutional privacy policy?
- What are the implications of ePortfolio for our existing institutional data security policy?
- How will different security and access permissions be accommodated at a policy level? eg. learner access, employer access, past student access.
- What is the institution’s legal liability with regards to materials stored within the learners’ ePortfolio?
- How can our policies allow maximum flexibility for the learner, while accommodating privacy, confidentiality and intellectual property concerns?
- Will inactive ePortfolios eventually be disposed of? At what point will this occur?

Teaching and Learning quality and outcomes
- What role can the Teaching and Learning Committee play to foster and encourage ePortfolio practice within the institution and in individual faculties?
- Can we identify and support champions in each faculty/school, to nurture and disseminate ePortfolio innovation and practice?
- How can we overcome resistance to change among academics who wish to focus primarily on their teaching and research in a particular discipline?
- What learning and teaching outcomes do we aim to achieve through the use of ePortfolios?
- How will ePortfolio activities be evaluated to ensure identified learning outcomes are being achieved?

Resource allocation and management
- What technical (ICT) resources are required for the development, management, promotion and evaluation of an ePortfolio system?
- What human resources are required for the development, management, promotion and evaluation of an ePortfolio system?
- Does existing student Internet access quota need to be modified to enable equitable access to ePortfolio?
- How much digital storage will we provide for each student?
- How long will we provide this digital storage for?
- How will these resources be funded?
Remember

Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to your own perspective and context.

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February 2009
ePortfolio concepts
for employers, professional bodies
and careers services

‘Building and maintaining an ePortfolio will help students to be better prepared for the recruitment process, meaning that the quality of employment applications will improve. Students will be able to answer interview questions and selection criteria more effectively by drawing on a wide variety of real life examples. This will make it easier for employers to accurately assess the qualities and suitability of each applicant.’

— Employer, Brisbane
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As an employer, a careers service staff member or a professional association officer, you might be considering how you can utilise ePortfolio systems and processes to enhance your employment processes or the employability and career planning of learners at your institution, or support professional accreditation activities.

What is an ePortfolio?
This guide uses the term ‘ePortfolio’ to refer to an electronically stored collection (or archive) of a student’s or graduate’s experiences, achievements and artefacts, together with their reflections on learning. The process of creating an ePortfolio can assist learners, graduates and employees to:
- Develop an holistic overview of their learning/experiences/development beyond individual subjects/classes
- Understand their learning and experience in terms of graduate attributes and employability skills
- Extract evidence to represent their learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses
- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on their ePortfolio content
- Plan and set their own personal development targets

Employability skills and ePortfolios
Our ability to build a competitive Australian workforce depends on our workers being able to apply a range of employability skills learned in many contexts and through a range of experiences (Precision Consultancy, 2007, p.1). The focus on graduate attributes and employability skills is central to the development of ePortfolios; the creation of an ePortfolio encourages graduates and employees to consider their studies and experiences in a broad career development context. A clear understanding of transferable competencies, such as communication, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, and teamwork, will assist workers not only in their transition from higher education to the workplace, but also with their ongoing professional development and lifelong learning. Employability skills are progressively developed both vertically and horizontally, in all formal and informal learning contexts, including paid employment, self-employment, formal education and volunteering in the community.

Beyond our own shores, government policies focused on lifelong learning and employability are driving ePortfolio development in regions such as Europe (particularly the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavia), Canada and New Zealand. To make the most of these developments, employers, careers services and professional associations need to understand the value of employability skills as the lens through which employees are increasingly viewing their own development and career paths. Incorporating ePortfolios into your business and recruitment practices can provide a common language to communicate with both new graduates and established workers.

How might ePortfolios assist your business processes?
ePortfolios can assist with a range of activities, including:
- Recruitment and appraisal processes
   By assisting job applicants to contextualise and understand their development in terms of employability skills and graduate attributes, ePortfolio use can enhance the quality of job and promotion applications, streamlining recruitment and candidate appraisal processes.
- Training Needs and Career Planning
   An ePortfolio can assist in the identification of skills gaps and training needs, enabling the provision of targeted employee development plans and thus a more efficient use of training budgets. They may also enable employees to reflect on themselves and encourage longer-term career plans to be implemented. ePortfolios can therefore serve as a tool to support staff performance and workforce planning in your organisation.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
   ePortfolios can be used to showcase evidence of CPD activities for professional accreditation purposes, as well as to identify both short and long-term career development needs.

www.jscc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/effectivepracticeexportfolios.pdf
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
  The process of collecting evidence of employee achievements for formal RPL documentation can be streamlined through the use of ePortfolios. Skills, abilities, and achievements for a particular employee can be compiled in a central repository, aligned with the specific skill sets recognised by higher and vocational education institutions, making the RPL process simpler and more efficient.

- Internationalisation of the workforce
  With the increasing internationalisation of the workforce, cross-candidate comparisons can be complex, due to differing qualifications and professional requirements across countries. ePortfolios provide a richer view of a candidate's abilities, fleshing out the academic qualifications to reveal more clearly the range of specific experiences and skills an individual has attained, thereby providing useful additional evidence on which to base recruitment decisions.

What would be involved in incorporating ePortfolios into my business?
Higher and vocational education institutions around the world are introducing ePortfolio systems and encouraging their students to develop ePortfolios. Student ePortfolios can be made available to organisations during graduate recruitment activities, providing a tailored view of candidate skills and experiences, aligned with the selection criteria for the position. An in-house ePortfolio system can be established to support the staff performance review and career development processes, or there may be opportunities to work with professional associations to develop a targeted CPD program.

Career services
Career services in many Australian education institutions offer a wide range of information and resources to support students and new graduates to gain employment, and develop their career management skills. ePortfolios provide a vital tool for working with academic staff to prepare students for fieldwork placement, work-integrated learning activities, or employment in their chosen career. The mission and role of most career services are in principle aligned with the goals of ePortfolio practice, which offers students a tool they can use to gather evidence of their skills, reflect on their experiences, and recognise their improvement and development over time… taking a more holistic view of their learning by reflecting on experiences... from all areas of their lives (CUT, 2009). Consequently, many academic careers services are keen to be lead players in the introduction of ePortfolios in their institution.

Professional associations
A growing number of professional associations are utilizing the ePortfolio process to provide evidence of the attainment of professional standards, as in the medical sciences, nursing and teaching. An ePortfolio allows a candidate to collate and reflect on their learning activities and work experience to substantiate their application for professional accreditation, or for current members to demonstrate active and ongoing professional development to facilitate their reaccreditation as a professional. Teacher registration processes, for example, encompass the requirement to present evidence of continuing professional development as a critical element of the renewal of registration, with a number of State departments in education mandating an ePortfolio as the format to substantiate the development of critical reflective practice on professional issues.

Case study: ePortfolios for career services
The Careers and Employment Service at QUT has been instrumental in working with the Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support to develop an institution-wide student ePortfolio platform. The relevance of the ePortfolio has recently been enhanced through a Career Development Program designed to help students focus on different aspects of career development during their studies at university. The program includes a series of modules such as Workplace Placement Preparation, Career Preparation, Career Management and Workplace Resilience. In each module, students are encouraged to engage with the Student ePortfolio, with its activities being scaffolded from an introduction to the ePortfolio early on, through to maximising its use in the later stages of the program. Built within the learning management system, the program provides seamless access for academics wishing to embed the modules into the curriculum in order to increase familiarity with realistic career destinations, to improve student certainty about their course choice, and to demonstrate how the curriculum develops capabilities and skills that will enhance employability. Students are encouraged to utilise the ePortfolio to assist in the development and recording of graduate capabilities and employability skill acquisition, and to make the curriculum itself more meaningful through its clear career relevance.

Case study: ePortfolios for professional associations
In line with the continuing complexity of the role of health professionals, there is an evolving interest in the potential of ePortfolios to facilitate personal reflections and to document professional development. Many highly experienced nursing personnel are choosing to undertake additional postgraduate studies to become nurse practitioners. An extensive set of formal curriculum competences needs to be mastered by students in order to achieve professional accreditation. In Queensland, the registration of nurse practitioners is managed by the Queensland Nursing Council (QNC). The QNC has adopted a portfolio approach to registration, with candidates asked to provide evidence of their clinical leadership and their reflective self-assessment of the attainment of the nurse practitioner competency standards.

Case study: ePortfolios for employers
In 2007 Queensland University of Technology (QUT) introduced a Professional Staff ePortfolio, which was collaboratively developed by Human Resources, Careers and Employment and the Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support (TILS). Pilot groups were established in both the Division of TILS and the Division of Administrative Services. The ePortfolio concept features a set of skills areas relevant to professional staff in an academic institution and specifically supports the People Capability Framework which seeks to improve the retention of staff by clearly articulating career pathways and facilitating staff progression and promotion. The Professional Staff ePortfolio has been acknowledged to be a key tool for staff to record evidence on personal and professional development and to share this with their supervisor as part of the performance planning and review process. In 2009, the focus will move to an Academic ePortfolio, which will be developed to ensure alignment with the promotion process and with current initiatives within the university to promote teaching quality and excellence.
Remember

you are not alone! Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to your own perspective and context!

Need more information?
Visit www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au
- ePortfolio concepts for learners
- ePortfolio concepts for academic staff
- ePortfolio concepts for institutional managers
- ePortfolio concepts for information technology and teaching and learning support services

Further reading

References

Acknowledgment
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Australian ePortfolio Project
www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au
February 2009
ePortfolio concepts
for staff/employees

‘After writing just one experience according to the ‘formula’ suggested by the ePortfolio team, I could notice a change in my thinking. I was learning to consider my experiences from an employer’s perspective and to identify – in all facets of my life – examples of skills that employers would value.’

— ePortfolio user, QUT
ePortfolios are becoming popular with employees around the world as a tool to enhance learning and assist with personal career development. As a staff member, you might be wondering how you can use an ePortfolio to support your learning and development. This guide will introduce you to ePortfolios, their benefits, and issues you need to consider when developing your own ePortfolio.

**What is an ePortfolio?**
This guide uses the term ‘ePortfolio’ to refer to an electronically stored collection (or archive) of an individual’s experiences, achievements and artefacts, together with their reflections on learning and professional development.

**Why use an ePortfolio?**
ePortfolios can be customised and personalised into a one-stop-shop to demonstrate your skills and experiences to supervisors and managers, colleagues, and potential employers. Many employees find their ePortfolio to be a valuable resource when it comes to participating in performance management and development processes, writing job applications and preparing for interviews. People who have used ePortfolios report having a greater awareness of their skills, greater confidence in their abilities, and feeling more independent as a learner.

In the professional context, an ePortfolio can assist you with your personal development by providing a single, organised repository from which you may:

- Develop an holistic overview of your learning/experiences/development
- Understand your achievements and experiences in terms of professional attributes and employability skills
- Extract evidence to represent your learning and achievements, for example to develop selection criteria responses
- Identify skills gaps through review of and reflection on your ePortfolio content
- Plan, set and review personal development targets.

An ePortfolio is not only a product, but more importantly a process, which can help you to better understand not just what you have learned, but how you have learned. As you reflect on your experiences to create your ePortfolio, you will also develop important lifelong learning abilities that complement your technical knowledge and skills.

Adapted from JISC (2008), Effective practice with e-Portfolios, p. 7.

www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/effectivepracticeportfolios.pdf

'It was only when I could write about my experiences that the really great value of the ePortfolio became apparent. My confidence in myself as a valuable employee increased dramatically!...And when it came to applying for jobs, I could readily draw together evidence from a wide variety of areas to demonstrate my competence...I believe that this confidence and maturity was evident in both my written applications and interviews.'

— ePortfolio user, QUT
What do I need to think about when creating and maintaining an ePortfolio?

What is my main reason for creating an ePortfolio?
Your reason(s) for creating the ePortfolio will guide you as to what evidence to incorporate. Your motivations might include:
- to help you address job or promotion applications
- to showcase your skills and experiences to your supervisor, potential employers or professional organisations
- to demonstrate the attainment of professional standards
  - Refer to the employability skills required by your industry (available from job advertisements, industry associations or career advisory services), and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them.
  - You are responsible to plan your personal and professional development and build your lifelong learning skills.
    - Refer to the skills and capabilities identified as important by your organisation, and think about which of your experiences and achievements align with them.
    - Considers what training or experiences you require to be able to develop those skills you don’t yet have.
  - Use your ePortfolio to look for patterns in your learning. Are there certain types of experiences or activities from which you seem to learn most? Aim to structure future learning opportunities around those types of experiences.
- to support your application for the recognition of prior learning (RPL)
  - After you have entered a range of experiences, sit back and reflect on which employability skill each entry represents. You will probably find that each entry can be used to demonstrate more than one skill or attribute.

Who will have access to my ePortfolio?
It is important whenever you add information to the Web to remember that it is a public space. While all ePortfolio systems provide privacy controls, it is essential that you understand exactly who can access your ePortfolio.
In most cases, your institution’s ePortfolio tool will enable you to customise your ePortfolio for different audiences, for example by selecting some experiences/artsfcts for your supervisor or colleagues to be able to see, whilst keeping other experiences for your eyes only. Check your institution’s ePortfolio guides to make sure you understand how this works.

What sort of experiences and artefacts should I include in my ePortfolio?
Think broadly when selecting experiences to include in your ePortfolio. You can include evidence of skills you have gained at work, at school or outside. In volunteer roles, or in your personal life. Some examples might include:
- roles or achievements in employment or voluntary work
- assessment pieces you performed well during your university degree
- awards you have won at work, or through your personal life/your community
- whatever you include should provide clear evidence of a particular skill or the professional development that you possess.

What will happen to my ePortfolio in the long term?
Some organisations may continue to provide former employees with access to ePortfolios after they leave the organisation. Check your organisation’s ePortfolio policy to find out whether this is possible.
Alternatively, you may be able to download a copy or file of your ePortfolio experiences to take with you if you leave your organisation. Finally it is important to know whether there is a point at which your ePortfolio will be deleted by the organisation storing it, for example, if it is inactive for a period of time.

How will I ensure my ePortfolio is kept up to date?
To ensure your ePortfolio gives you the greatest benefit, keep your information up-to-date. Think about how you are going to achieve this.
- Set aside half an hour every Friday to add the week’s achievements to your ePortfolio.
- After a major event (e.g. conference, presentation, project), take time to reflect on your experience and add an entry about it to your ePortfolio.
- At the end of each month, spend an hour browsing through your ePortfolio. Consider if there are any new experiences or artefacts you could add to it as evidence of your learning or skills.
Remember
You are not alone! Other stakeholders are part of the ePortfolio process, so consider the issues that are relevant to your own perspective and context!

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- ePortfolio concepts for information technology and teaching and learning support services
- ePortfolio concepts for employers, professional bodies and career services
- ePortfolio concepts for learners

Further reading
Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), (2008).
Effective practice with ePortfolios: Supporting 21st century learning.
Available from www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/e-portfolios
Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), (2008).
InfoKit on ePortfolios.
Available from www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/e-portfolios

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