

# MAWRD | Portfolio

## Overview

All students will compose an **online digital portfolio** of significant work done for courses. This work will be curated and submitted as an online digital portfolio both at the midpoint of the program – **Mid-Program Portfolio** – and at the completion of the program – **Professional Portfolio**.

A portfolio is an extension of your CV or résumé that accounts for your work and work processes by describing and explaining your academic or professional growth, including achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.

The premise of portfolios is that a single, written product does not tell a full story of what is learned in a single course or even an academic program. Much thinking, experimentation, and even mistakes are part of learning, and the portfolio allows you to display and reflect on these important learning experiences. It gives you the opportunity to select examples of different kinds of writing and writing experiences, to articulate connections between those texts and experiences, to consider your development over time, and to provide context for the work you have done. In short, **a portfolio allows you to compose and curate an academic and/or professional identity.**

As you work to complete both the Mid-Program and Professional Portfolios, consider getting advice from peers and experts:

- Meet with your faculty advisor and other faculty members, especially those with whom you have taken courses.
- Ask your faculty advisor or MAWRD Director about alumni working in your professional field and if you might be able to contact them.
- Schedule an appointment with the [DePaul Career Center](#).
- **Collect and analyze job descriptions in your field.**
- Research specific companies and organizations.

## Purpose

- To compose a digital portfolio that curates your professional and/or academic identity, including achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.
- To account for your own writing and learning choices as you pursue the MAWRD (as demonstrated in the reflection essays for both the Mid-Program and Professional Portfolios).

## Mid-Program Portfolio

**The Mid-Program Portfolio is a draft of your Professional Portfolio.** It is intended to help you both to reflect on your path through the MAWRD program and to prepare for your post-graduation plans.

After completing the sixth course but before taking the ninth course, you must submit a portfolio to your advisor and meet with him/her to discuss both the portfolio and your future plans in the program. The Mid-Program Portfolio must be submitted, discussed with your advisor, and approved before you can register for your ninth course in the program. Visit the WRD Blog for [Mid-Program Portfolio Tips & Reminders](#).

## Professional Portfolio

**The Professional Portfolio should situate your work within a professional field and to appeal to prospective employers or professional colleagues.** It is intended to showcase, creatively and inventively, how you fit within a professional field, industry, and/or discipline. The Professional Portfolio is due at the beginning of Week 4 of your last quarter in the program/ Visit the WRD Blog for [Professional Portfolio Resources](#).

## Audience

Your primary audience is your professional and/or academic field that you are trying to appeal to (i.e., those whom you are trying to persuade regarding your professional qualities and qualifications). In addition to the primary audience, you should consider your secondary audience (i.e., those who might take an interest in your work and help you to indirectly persuade your primary audience) and tertiary audience (i.e., those who may form a judgment of your work based on your portfolio).

## Genre

Although there are many more ways to categorize portfolios, the important takeaway is that the type of portfolio you are producing should have a **specific purpose** and should address an **authentic audience**. A professional portfolio for a practicing teacher will be different than one for an aspiring teacher, and both of these will be different than one for an aspiring professional writer. Visit the WRD Blog for [resources for and examples of professional writing portfolios](#) and [resources for and examples of teaching portfolios](#).

Your professional portfolio might

- Include completed work and progress toward a project,
- Exhibit your best work and achievements,
- Demonstrate competences and skills for evaluation,
- Highlight experiences and abilities relevant to a professional field, and/or
- Present a teaching philosophy and showcase pedagogical materials and experience (for a teaching portfolio).

## Requirements

What you include in your portfolio depends on your **purpose**, **audience**, and **genre**, but all portfolios should include the following:

- **“About” page**: summarizes your academic or professional identity, including interests and goals.
- **CV or résumé**: summarizes your academic or professional achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.
- **Work samples** (typically 4–6 projects): showcases your deliverables and provides **contextual commentary** or descriptions for your intended audience.
- **Your contact information**: displays contact information.

## Work Samples

Composing a portfolio requires that you keep track of your work (**collection**), take responsibility for selecting work samples that represent your achievements (**selection**), and reflect on your work, processes, and intellectual growth (**reflection**).

You should select your work samples to persuasively showcase the portfolio’s specific purpose for your authentic audience. Typically, a variety of work samples helps to show the full range of your achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills. “Real world” experience, such as internships, service-learning projects, and volunteer work, make compelling work samples because they may allow you to show how you responded to real challenges and contingencies, rather than responding to an assignment prompt.

The portfolio must include evidence from **4–6 projects** that you have completed in the MAWRD program. The projects should be work that you could present to your **authentic audience**, e.g., potential employers or professional colleagues. Therefore, you should include work samples that closely match expectations (e.g., content, design, genre) in the professional field you hope to join. These projects may be presented in the exact format in which they were submitted for a class, or you may revise them for the purpose of the portfolio.

Along with the primary work sample, you may include additional materials that support the portfolio’s rhetorical purpose.

## Quick Tips

- Be conscious of any sensitive information in your work samples, and make sure to secure permission from your clients or organizations before sharing work you have done for them.
- Be sure to secure permission from students if sharing student work.
- Embedding your work samples is usually better than linking because it keeps your audience on your site. To do this, you can use web services like embed.ly or use an HTML iframe to embed a shareable Google Doc.

## Commentary

A work sample is only as good as the way you contextualize it. Each project should include contextual commentary so that your authentic audience can understand the project, your role in composing it, and what it showcases for your professional and/or academic identity (e.g., achievements, competencies, experiences, skills).

Think of the commentary like the curated comments in a museum—text that helps a visitor understand what she is seeing as she walks through the exhibits. Your commentary should analyze, explain, position, or reflect on your featured work sample to help your audience understand it. For example, think about how you might translate the rhetorical decisions you made in composing a course project for a non-academic professional audience.

Visit the WRD Blog for two heuristics, or planning activities, that you might apply to frame your projects for your audience: [Your Portfolio and the STAR Method](#) and [Writing for Your Portfolio: Kairos as 9 Points of Articulation](#). These activities are for invention and brainstorming; they are not required organizational strategies for your portfolio.

## Rhetorical Design

Digital affordances should be used to enhance your audience's understanding (e.g., usable section and page titles, clear organization, logical order and layout, effective images, links, embedded files, use of tables, etc.). Text should be formatted for readability, and images should be related to the rhetorical purpose. See the **Assessment** criteria for additional design considerations.

## Online Platforms

There are plenty of options out there for hosting a digital portfolio. Each platform has its strengths and weaknesses, so look around and see what works best for your purposes. Visit the WRD Blog for a short [review of platforms](#). Here are some of the most popular platforms: Digation, Google Sites, Squarespace, Weebly, Wix, WordPress.

Some web platforms may show advertising on your portfolio. Be aware of the costs to remove advertisements before choosing a platform. For example, WordPress has a paid upgrade that allows you to remove advertisements and make a unique domain name.

## Additional Resources

The WRD Blog has a webpage with posts about portfolios, including resources and tips for [Making a Portfolio](#):

- <https://wrdblog.org/wrd-portfolio-requirement/>
- <https://wrdblog.org/tag/portfolio/>

If you would like to see samples of successful portfolios by previous students:

- Anthony Melville: <https://anthonymelville.com/>
- Kelsey Bolger: <https://kelseyportfolio.wordpress.com/>
- Kerri Martin: <https://writerkerrimartin.com/>

## Reflection Essay

Both the **Mid-Program Portfolio** and **Professional Portfolio** will be accompanied by a reflection essay (at least 500 words). **The reflection is not included in the portfolio itself; it is submitted as a separate document.**

The reflection essay should explain how the portfolio is a fitting response to your academic or professional plans. You are encouraged to complete a draft of the reflection essay early in the process and to share it with your advisor or mentors in planning for your academic or professional goals. The reflection essay should describe and explain:

- Your authentic audience;
- Research you may have completed in studying your professional field, such as the genre conventions for a professional portfolio in that field;
- Expectations of employees in the role/s you hope to fill, e.g., preparations, skills, technical competencies; and,
- Weaknesses in preparations, skills, and technical competencies in relation to your professional audience and purpose, and how you have developed the portfolio to offset them.

## Submission + Assessment

### Mid-Program Portfolio

**The Mid-Program Portfolio is due at the beginning of Week 4 of the quarter after you have completed your sixth course.** Please submit your portfolio by completing the Google Form: <https://forms.gle/293b4BpQi9cUkS1p9>. The form asks you to submit a link to your portfolio as well as a .zip file containing full-page screenshots of each webpage of your portfolio.

The Mid-Program Portfolio will be reviewed by your WRD advisor, who will email you by the end of week 5 to schedule a meeting that should occur between weeks 6 and 7. The portfolio will be evaluated as "Pass" or "Fail." A portfolio that does not initially earn a score of "Pass" must be revised until it does so in order for you to register for courses for the next quarter. Any questions about the portfolio should be directed to your advisor in the MA program.

### Professional Portfolio

**The Professional Portfolio is due at the beginning of Week 4 of your last quarter in the program.** Please submit your portfolio by completing the Google Form: <https://forms.gle/VZ6sYQ1nsp6unDoi9>. The form asks you to submit a link to your portfolio as well as a .zip file

containing full-page screenshots of each webpage of your portfolio. The Professional Portfolio is reviewed by the MA WRD Graduate Committee, and it must be approved in order for you to graduate.

The Professional Portfolio will be evaluated by the MAWRD Graduate Committee as "Pass" or "Fail." By the end of week 6, you will receive an assessment of your portfolio. If your portfolio is not deemed passing, you must revise and resubmit the portfolio by the end of week 8. A portfolio that does not initially earn a score of "Pass" must be revised until it does so. Any questions about the portfolio should be directed to your advisor in the MA program.

## MAWRD Portfolio: Assessment

### Rhetorical Reflection: Criteria

- Includes a persuasive collection of work samples (4–6 projects), including supporting materials.
- Demonstrates planning and thoughtfulness, translating and transforming your academic program for an authentic audience.
- Composes a rhetorically astute commentary for work samples.
- Demonstrates multiple examples of developing professional achievements, competencies, experiences, and skills.
- Articulates a professional identity.

### Rhetorical Design: Criteria

- Applies design principles to compose portfolio, e.g., contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity.
- Applies principles of navigation and visual hierarchy to compose portfolio, e.g., white space, type size + weight, color, visual ornamentation, genre conventions.
- Uses typography and color to enhance readability, legibility, and accessibility.
- Integrates multimedia elements to enhance rhetorical purpose and accessibility.
- Applies best practices for accessibility, e.g., alternate text for graphics, transcriptions for audio or video.

## MAWRD: Learning Outcomes

- Describe key concepts, theories, and histories in the study of writing and rhetoric.
- Produce complex written arguments that demonstrate a clear, cohesive, and appropriate written style.
- Design persuasive multimodal texts.
- Assess the ethical, civic, or political dimensions of rhetoric, language, or writing technologies, including dynamics of culture and power
- **(PDW only)** Compose effective texts for specific workplace or professional audiences; or, **(TWL only)** Apply current theories and principles of writing pedagogy to the production and analysis of pedagogical material.