

Ten Tips for Faculty on Preparing Your Portfolio

1. In each category (teaching/primary duties, research/creative activity, service), follow the organization of your Departmental Application of Criteria (DAC). Using the same headings and the same language as your DAC makes it easier for the reader to make an evaluation relative to your DAC.
2. Organize your materials with different audiences in mind. Remember that your portfolio will be evaluated first by your own department and chair. Then it goes on to the dean, UPC, and Provost, who may not be very familiar with you, your field, or your DAC. So, make it easy for all readers to find and understand your documentation.
3. Include supporting documentation for every activity you have performed, but generally limit yourself to one piece of documentation for each activity. Stating that you did an activity is not supporting documentation. For example, stating that you gave a presentation is not evidence; document this activity with an acknowledgment letter or a printed program. (You may need more than one piece of documentation if your reader will not be familiar with the quality of a research or creative activity or with the time commitment of a service activity. For instance, if you want to make sure that evaluators outside your discipline recognize the quality of the journal in which you published, you may want to include documentation showing that the journal is indexed or has a low acceptance rate.)
4. Be thorough with your documentation, but do not pad your portfolio with announcements, minutes, handouts from other people's talks, materials from outside the evaluation period, unnecessary documentation and non-documentation.
5. Avoid double-counting your activities. In rare instances, one activity may legitimately fall into two different categories. If you choose to list an activity in multiple categories, be sure to explain to the readers how your DAC justifies this cross-listing.
6. Be mindful of the personnel calendar. Specifically, know exactly when your portfolio is due, and then give yourself enough time to assemble and organize the documents.
7. Be proactive about your peer and chair reviews of your classroom performance. Do not assume that your colleagues will automatically know that you need to be observed. Seek them out and ask them to observe your teaching at a mutually agreed-upon time. Your DAC should specify your responsibilities in arranging classroom visitations.
8. Before submitting your portfolio, show it to a mentor or senior department member (someone you trust and who is not on your DPC or the UPC) for feedback. Allow enough time for the person to look at the portfolio and for you to make revisions if you choose.
9. Be neat. Make the divisions between sections of your portfolio very clear and distinct. Have a neatly typed outline or narrative on your teaching and performance of primary duties. Follow this with all the documentation that supports the claims made in the outline or narrative. Do the same for research/creative activity and for service. While neatness obviously is not an explicit evaluation criterion, the evaluators are human. Neatness and sloppiness might be subconscious "tie-breakers" if you happen to be "on the edge" in their minds.
10. Ask a senior colleague to show you his or her successful portfolio to use as a model.