

# Senior Portfolio Instructions & Requirements – 2020

The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate to a jury of faculty and industry professionals what you have learned during your time here, and whether or not you are ready to graduate. Portfolios also have another valuable and practical purpose for you: when you graduate, you cannot expect to be hired as a professional communicator *if you can't prove that you can do the work.*

## The Portfolio

**All portfolios will be digital (online) portfolios in the form of a website.** You no longer have the option of turning in a physical portfolio. If you have the skills, feel free to build your website from scratch. Otherwise there are a number of website builders available online. Also, keep in mind that you'll likely be using the site as part of your job application process, and it would be beneficial to get in the habit of keeping your website updated so the next time you look for a job, your latest work is online.

Here are two links to read up on some popular website builders:

<https://websitesetup.org/website-builders/>

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2484510,00.asp>

## Organization

While there isn't a set template for how to design your website, it should be **well organized and easy to use**. Depending on your Mass Comm track and the work you're presenting, you'll need to decide how to best present your work. However, your **RESUME** should be featured on its own page (have its own tab) and should be one of the first things seen.

Look on the department website (<http://www.siue.edu/MASSCOMM/internships.html>) for a handout explaining in detail how to write resumes and cover letters.

After the Resume, you should divide your work in a sensible fashion. For example, pages for ads, scripts, press releases, etc. If you produced work at your internship, you can include an Internship page.

Some of the work you include may be more academic in nature...something an employer wouldn't necessarily want to see, but something the faculty may need to see to be able to thoroughly grade your portfolio. You can include an **ACADEMIC** tab for this kind of work (research papers and the like). Once you've graduated, you can delete or hide this tab if it's unnecessary for your future endeavors.

To make it easier for the judges, set up the website so that documents open when clicked on, rather than automatically downloading. You want to make it as easy as possible for the judges to grade your portfolio. Be sure to keep things consistent throughout (how things open, types of files, etc.). Also, be sure when files open they're large enough to be easily read.

I would suggest that you keep a close eye on your portfolio website from when you turn it in until you've been notified that grading is finished – to make sure nothing crashes/disappears/etc.

*When finished with your portfolio, email the URL, along with your name, concentration area and any required password to [cobvers@siue.edu](mailto:cobvers@siue.edu). And finally, remember: Something worth doing is worth doing well.*

## Portfolio Tips

In discussing minimum numbers of examples of your work in the paragraphs below, consider the minimum number of examples just that: the minimum. To avoid the minimum grade, provide more than the minimum number of pieces. However, don't go overboard and include EVERYTHING you've produced. There is no magic number, but if you notice you have more than 25 pieces, you may want to ask yourself if all of those are really necessary (they're not). A smaller collection of great material is better than a larger collection of mediocre (or bad) material.

Your portfolio work can come from anywhere – classes, internships, jobs, previous schools, and things you created on your own. If using internship/job work, be sure to have permission to use it, and be sure it's something you had considerable creative control over. If you can't get something in a digital format, you can scan the work to use.

You are **required to include a brief narrative** for each piece of work. Basically telling the viewer what it is, what it was made for, and how it fits with the ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies (see the list at the end of this document). If your work was actually used (as part of a job or internship) you can mention that in the narrative and provide a link to it.

The narrative is especially important with regards to group projects. Be sure to specify which parts of the work you were responsible for. **Never take credit for someone else's work.**

If relevant, you may also want to include the software/hardware used to create it.

For example: "This ad was partner project for MC 326: Copywriting & Design. The assignment was to research a target audience that I am not a part of and create an ad targeted towards that audience. I was the Art Director for this project, and my partner was the Copywriter. This fits the following ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: 4, 5, 7, 9, 12. I used Adobe Photoshop and InDesign to create the ad."

**Proofread EVERYTHING**, and then have a friend/relative/anyone proofread everything again.

Make your portfolio as easy as to read/judge/understand as possible. The judge shouldn't have any questions after looking at your portfolio.

Never include anything with an instructor's grades, comments, etc.

Be **EXTREMELY** careful when putting projects written by a group in your portfolio. These have a tendency to include a lot of spelling and grammar errors. Even though you may not have specifically written a section, any errors in it will be attributed to you since it's in your portfolio.

If you're including anything from two or three years ago, you may want to edit/re-write it. You're probably better now than you were then, so something that started off as an ok idea in 204 may be able to be freshened up into something better.

Make sure you follow the Mass Comm format for scripts and storyboards. You may need to reformat some of your work. Be sure every script is consistent (except scripts created at an internship – these would be in whatever format the internship uses).

### **Guidelines and requirements for each professional option:**

*Please note that, except as noted, what follows are not inclusive lists: just examples.*

**Journalism** portfolios must include at least ten news stories that carry your byline online or in print and/or that you shot, wrote, and produced yourself. Group your news stories by type (e.g., hard news, feature, investigative). Original reporting done for SIUE Mass Comm. courses must be presented in department broadcast style. Use the templates provided in class. **Do not include in-class writing assignments for your Journalism portfolio if you did not do the original reporting. This goes for text-based, audio, or video reports. If you didn't report the story or rewrite it as part of your duties for a professional newsroom, don't include it in your portfolio site.**

If you have produced layouts or design mockups for the Alestle, for internships, or for courses, those should be included in your "Design" section. If you have a project that you designed *and* wrote, you only need to include it once, but make it very clear that you did both on that piece.

Only include video news scripts if they are based on original reporting or if you rewrote them for an internship as a production assistant or in some similar capacity. For example, if you've had a broadcast news internship where you've done some re-writing of scripts based on wire copy, feel free to include those coupled with a "producer's demo" reel. Include the related scripts as PDFs, screen captures, or scanned copies. Put each professional script in its own file. Order the files so that they correspond exactly with your producer's reel.

If you include a video reel showing your shooting, writing, editing skills, etc., you must embed the reel on a separate tab or page on your portfolio site and you must include a description explaining your contributions to each work featured in your reel. If you have six clips in your reel, explain for each clip if you wrote the story, shot it, edited it, or did some combination of those. This way, you can include works done with a partner, as long as you make it clear what your contribution was. Keep your demo reel, if you have one, under five minutes.

Show that you have great reporting skills, writing skills, production skills, and design skills. Explain in your narratives a bit about how you developed these skills and how you will continue to learn as electronic news technologies continue to change.

**TV-Radio** portfolios must include at least ten separate scripts and a demo reel. Script examples include: broadcast news, commercials or PSAs, documentaries, and other scripts, written in the department-approved broadcast style. (Examples of short radio copy such as radio liners, short news stories, promos, etc., must fill up *one complete page* to equal *one* of your required minimum number of stories.) Each script must be **your original work**, not rewrites of wire service, newspaper, web or anyone else's copy. Among all of these examples, you must submit **at least one commercial or a PSA script**. With the exception of work done on your internship or in part-time professional work, all broadcast copy must be formatted in departmental style. Go to <http://www.siu.edu/MASSCOMM> to download department style models.

All TV-R students must include either a video or a radio demo reel. See below for instructions for video or audio demo reels. You **may** turn in both radio and TV reels, but you **must** submit one or the other.

**Advertising** portfolios must include at least ten different ads (in this case “ads” can mean print/digital ads, billboards, direct mail pieces, flyers, and any other form of promotional material). Your ten ads must include both print/digital ads and broadcast commercial scripts. You must also include at least one TV commercial storyboard and at least one ad campaign proposal or an actual ad campaign. Any group project in your portfolio should be preceded in your narrative by a description of the project and a clear statement of what you personally contributed to the project. Then include the portion of the campaign that you authored. Besides what you must include, as noted above, other examples for advertising students can include:

- Campaigns
  - Media Plans
  - Brochures
  - Radio/TV Commercial Scripts (must be in MC formats)
  - Layout and Design – Some material may focus more on design so a segment labeled Layout and Design may be suitable.
  - Any media products produced at your internship
- |                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Individual Ads       | Proposals      |
| TV Storyboards       | Newsletters    |
| Feature/News Stories | Press Releases |

**Corporate and Institutional** portfolios must include at least ten examples of corporate or institutional media products. These examples could include layouts, multimedia products (websites, mobile app screenshots, etc.), video and audio productions (including an audio or video demo reel – see demo reel info below), feature stories, newsletters, media kits, news releases, speeches and any other writing projects you created for MC 422. See the Advertising standards above for how to properly identify and differentiate work done by yourself in a group project.

Demo reels could include projects produced in such courses as MC 431 or for *SIUE Global Village*, or portions of longer-length corporate projects.

## Information for Demo Reels

Demo Reels should never be longer than 6 minutes. Do NOT include *entire* productions, other than really good commercials/PSAs. The best demo reels display the finest **portions** of all your productions, edited together in an attractive, entertaining, skillful way. You should “tease” viewers; just giving them a taste of the various kinds of video products you are capable of producing. However, this doesn’t mean that you should cut together a simple montage of otherwise disconnected images set to music. This doesn’t tell a potential employer anything about whether or not you can **tell a story**; whether it’s news, feature documentary, corporate or a commercial. So, for example, if you’re editing a news or feature package, give the audience a minute or less, and then fade out and fade into the next piece. This is what we mean by “just a taste.” If you can come up with a cool After Effects transition between pieces, consider using it throughout your demo reel. Don’t use a bunch of different ones: that can be a turn-off. But if you use at least one transition that has to come from a program like After Effects, it shows a sharp production manager – without having to say a word – that you have advanced chops in editing.

Audio levels should be consistent throughout the reel.

The only time randomly-edited video montages set to music would be appropriate would be if you are applying for a job just as a videographer, and the job description is clear that directing (read storytelling) skills are not required. However, on better-balanced reels as described above, a very short (less than a minute) montage at the end after showing “tastes” of completed works is acceptable, if it’s cleverly and creatively edited.

Finally, be sure you say what you did. For example, if you directed a commercial but someone else shot it, be sure to mention that. If another student puts the shot you claimed on his/her reel, the judge will assume someone is lying about it, and you will be called on to explain yourself. **Again, never take credit for someone else’s work.**

Demo Reels for radio news should feature you reading copy **you have written** in a short, local newscast (two minutes or less), plus selected clips from a few radio documentaries you produced and clips from one or more interviews you’ve conducted. Be sure to liberally pepper your news stories with very short actualities (sound bites). Usually these demo reels are five minutes in length or less.

Major problem areas for video reels include: uneven audio levels and flash (black) framers, poor choices regarding where to cut, and a lack of creativity. Audio reel problems include poor levels, unedited air checks, poor announcing skills and a lack of skillful, creative editing. Remember that faculty and potential employers are interested in both the content and the quality and creativity that went into putting your reel together. Just remember the weak points your professors noted in your production course assignments and fix them. And remember, the same professors who showed you how to improve your productions will be the people grading your portfolio now. They expect to see -- and hear -- major improvement. Don’t just turn in the same mediocre stuff you got a “C” for. Turn a “C” into an “A” and then include it.

## **Professional Values and Competencies:**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

1. understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
4. demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
5. understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
6. demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
7. think critically, creatively and independently;
8. conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
9. write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
10. critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
11. apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
12. apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.