



## **GUIDE TO PORTFOLIO EVALUATION**

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### **Table of Contents**

Faculty Guide to Portfolio Evaluation	Page 2
Student Guide to Portfolio Evaluation	Page 8
Attachments	Page 9
Student Questionnaire for prospective Portfolio development	Page 10
Sample Portfolio Table of Contents	Page 11
Portfolio Step-by-Step Procedure	Page 12
Articles of Documentation for Experiential Learning Activities	Page 13
Portfolio Student Application Form	Page 14
Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Form	Page 15

# Edison State Community College

## FACULTY GUIDE TO PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

### I. An Overview of the Assessment Process

The evaluation of prior learning through the development and faculty evaluation of a student-prepared portfolio is a technique by which a student achievement of course objectives can be measured. The portfolio is the tangible end product of a student's examination of his/her past experiences. It identifies and clarifies college-level learning within those experiences. It documents that learning in a format that can be evaluated by a faculty member for possible credit awards.

It's your task to evaluate whether his/her request for credit is justified. As the assessor, you'll be the judge of whether or not a student has the learning comparable to the course (s) he/she claims to have.

In all cases, you have the right to determine what you believe a student must have in order to satisfy your criteria for awarding credit and the opportunity to define your expectations "up front" prior to actual student involvement in the assessment process. This will occur both formally, through the creation and revision of the course syllabi with learning outcomes, and informally through discussions with the students themselves.

### I. Standards and Credit Awards

#### A. The standards applied to the evaluation of prior learning include the following:

1. The learning should have general applicability outside of the specific situation in which it was acquired; general principles, theories and techniques must be articulated;
2. The learning should include both a theoretical and practical understanding of the subject area;
3. The learning should be assessable by an expert who can objectively measure and evaluate the learning that has occurred;
4. The learning should be of college-level quality as determined by you, the faculty expert;
5. The learning should meet specific course objectives and competencies and should have some relationship to degree aspirations or the educational goals;
6. The knowledge or skill represented as learning should be current with that expected in classroom/employment situations;
7. The level or competence should be approximate what would normally be considered "C" level or better performance in the classroom, with a 75% level of attainment of course objectives acceptable for course credit awards.
8. Two CAEL publications outlining standards for the assessment process may be utilized as guides; *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, & Procedure*, Susan Simosko and Associates, 198. (Copies of these and other publications which may be assistance to you are located in the Advising Resource Center (Room 160) or the Professional Resource Center of the Library).

B. The policies regarding credit awards are:

1. Credit for prior learning via portfolio will be awarded only after comprehensive assessment and recommendation by faculty.
2. Credit for prior learning will be awarded only to students admitted to ESCC.
3. Credit for prior learning will be awarded by ESCC for:
  - a) Courses that it currently offers for credit; and
  - b) Courses for credits which are applicable to the student's certificate, degree, or educational plans.
4. A maximum of 30 credit hours may be earned through credit via prior learning (ie: portfolio, credit by exam, etc.)

## II. The Portfolio Assessment Process

The portfolio will be organized in a consistent format following the course syllabus that will assist you in identifying the student's proposed college-level learning. The portfolio will contain the following components:

- A. Completed Prior Learning Evaluation Via Portfolio Form
- B. Transcripts of all prior college course work
- C. Resume
- D. Course Syllabus Part I
- E. Documentation
  1. An identification, by course, of specific course objectives/competencies achieved through prior learning;
  2. Documentation and other evidence of prior learning that supports the credit request.
  3. Verification of the authenticity of the documentation provided.

You will in most instances have had an initial meeting with the student to assist in clarifying the potential for credit awards and a subsequent meeting to clarify specific portfolio requirements. Once you receive the portfolio for evaluation, you are asked to review the portfolio, to interview the student concerning the portfolio contents and its relationship to the courses for which credit is being sought, and to conduct any additional evaluations or assessments you feel are appropriate and necessary for a recommendation to be made. You may request additional information, conduct a job-site visit, ask the student to participate in a simulation, or other such assessment techniques.

You have 21 days from the time you receive the portfolio to complete the evaluation process; it is hoped that the process can be completed in less time.

### III. Evaluation Issues

In reviewing and assessing a portfolio, the standards identified earlier are the criteria upon which a credit award is made. Because of the nature of a portfolio, four basic and independent issues related to the documentation are presented for your consideration:

#### 1. Directness

A copy of an article a student has written is direct evidence of that person's writing ability. A job description or a letter of documentation from an employer stating the student's abilities is indirect evidence. Direct evidence is generally more preferable than indirect evidence, although both may be included in the portfolio.

#### 2. Authenticity

Did the student actually write the article by him/herself? This question of authenticity is a separate issue and similar to one you may have experienced in your classroom: Did the student write the term paper by him/herself?

#### 3. Breadth

Is a single article demonstrative of the breadth comparable to course expectations? How about two or three? Can they all be for one employer or should several be represented? These types of questions deal with the breadth of learning and documentation represented in a portfolio. The breadth expected in a portfolio should correspond closely with the breadth expected for the particular course that's being evaluated.

#### 4. Quality

What is the quality of the articles in a portfolio? How well did the student perform his/her duties as a technical writer, especially as it relates to the quality of learning acquired from the job performance? How does that quality compare with that expected in the course? The above questions typify those related to the quality of the learning represented in a portfolio.

Since these issues are critical to the effective evaluation of a portfolio, the following elaboration is presented to highlight additional thoughts in these areas:

Direct evidence or documentation, in a portfolio context, is generally meant to be actual work samples (reports prepared, sketches made) or products of the learning (a manual, photographs, etc.). It may include audio and/or visual reproductions (slides or sculptures, tape of a musical score) in some areas. Direct evidence might also be obtained during the evaluation process by asking the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge or skills by doing something. The interview you conduct with the student may be another form of direct evidence of the student's knowledge.

Indirect evidence is included in the portfolio and can add much to the evaluation process and outcomes, but it must be recognized that indirect evidence can vary greatly in its value. Two types of indirect evidence exist:

Primary: where a student's performance or products have been evaluated or recognized by knowledgeable persons or groups within that field. Examples might include evaluation of job performance by in-house "experts"; critique of an art work by a nationally recognized critic; license or awards granted as result of examination and recognized by a state or national body; a training program developed by a student and adopted for national use; participation in selective professional organizations or activities where some level of achievement is a prerequisite for participation. Other examples abound, but it is at this qualitative difference in documentation that requires your sound academic judgment in its review.

Secondary: indirect evidence may include a host of possibilities. The following list appears in a similar guide used at Thomas A. Edison State Community College and is a condensation from material originally appearing in Assessing Prior Learning – A CAEL Handbook by John Knapp.

In the area of Authenticity of Evidence, care must be taken to ensure that the credit award is based learning, skills, and products that the student does in fact possess or has produced. Outright fraud is a possibility, either in misrepresenting another's work as one's own, in collusion between the student and a person making a commendation or evaluation, or in the forging of certificates and performance evaluations. More realistic is the situation where a student may genuinely not realize the role played by others in creating the products. Examples might include an article written by a student that underwent significant revision and editing by other, jointly written manuals or reports, the technician who completes a major project but with significant technical assistance from the engineering department, and the "work team" project in which several others and significant input.

Additional verification may be requested, either through the student, or by yourself to an employer. Most often, questions or doubts can be resolved by careful questioning of a student's role in the project or the reasons for doing it a certain way (Ex. Why did you introduce these details here?).

A more critical area occurs as a result of the differences in terminology, policies, processes and learning outcomes that may occur in the classroom vs. non-classroom learning situations. Although the same concept may have been learned in both settings, differences in what that concept is called and how it's applied may vary significantly in both settings. It may be that the student has in fact demonstrated all the steps necessary to the application of a concept, but doesn't have a name or the right term for that concept. It is perhaps in this area that the concept of assessment of prior learning gets its strongest test.

It is here that the assessment process does its true work—in identifying, with the course syllabus as a guide, the degree to which the concept has been learned, whether that learning represents and is equivalent to the expectation of the course, and whether that learning meets all the criteria tests for acceptability. It is here again that faculty judgment is critical, especially when complemented by flexibility on your part in examining the learning claim thoroughly.

Another issue that arises in this area is that of partial course equivalency. A student's portfolio for a particular course may represent a significant percentage of comparable learning, but not quite at a level that would enable you to award credit for that particular course. The Edison State policy is an "all or none" policy—either he/she meet all criteria or no credit is awarded.

However, if in our judgment a formal or informal independent study plan to learn those missing concepts or skills is appropriate, that can be accommodated in the process. The student would engage in that learning activity and return to you for additional discussion or evaluation of that learning. If at that point you are satisfied that the student has met all criteria for a credit award, then it can be made. Again, this is a critical area of faculty judgment, both in terms of the assessment process and philosophy and in terms of practical issues, such as time commitment and the nature of the information or skills that are lacking.

A final issue may involve a situation where a portfolio is submitted for one course, but may be more appropriate for a credit award in a different course or may, in fact, represent the award of credit in more courses than the student requested. In such circumstances, consultation with your Academic Dean is encouraged with two probable outcomes: (1) if in the opinion of the assessor the learning description and documentation are sufficiently strong to meet multiple course criteria, credit may be awarded directly for the "new" course; or (2) the student would be asked to revise and resubmit the portfolio based on the "new" course criteria.

# Edison State Community College

## STUDENT GUIDE TO PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

### I. What is a Portfolio Evaluation?

It is the evaluation of prior learning through the development and faculty evaluation of a student-prepared portfolio, a technique by which student achievement of course objectives can be measured. The portfolio is the tangible end product of a student's examination of his/her past experiences and training. It certifies college-level learning within those experiences and documents that learning in a format that can be evaluated by a faculty member for possible credit awards.

To receive credit an individual's knowledge must be documented and verified as being equal to that gained in specific Edison State courses and appropriate for his/her degree program.

Edison State follows the guidelines for the evaluation of prior learning established by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL).

### II. Who is the target audience for a Portfolio Evaluation?

- A. Individuals with substantial learning which seems similar to specific courses taught at Edison State and who wants to receive credit for his/her prior knowledge to complete their degree in a timelier manner.
- B. Individuals with considerable life and work experience who might not consider earning a degree due to the time required and the few working years they may have remaining.
- C. Individuals who feel frustration from being required to take courses in which the content is already known.
- D. Individuals who do not plan to transfer to a portfolio-based Bachelor's program.

### III. What skills or qualities will a student need to be successful?

Good writing skills are important. ENG 121S or equivalent is recommended. Experience at researching and preparing business or technical reports would be helpful.

Students should review the attached questionnaire to determine readiness for the portfolio process.

#### IV. Overview of the Assessment Process

- A. The completed portfolio will include the components listed on the attached sample table of contents.
- B. Faculty members or Academic Deans will meet informally with the portfolio student prior to application assessment process to assist the student in clarifying any questions about portfolio components and requirements he/she may have.
- C. Faculty assessor(s) will evaluate the portfolio and determine whether to award credit as requested. Specific evaluation issues that assessors will address are:
  - 1) the directness of evidence supporting the student claim for credit;
  - 2) authenticity of the evidence and assessor satisfaction with its documentation and verification;
  - 3) whether the breadth of learning represented are comparable to that required in the course for which credit is sought, as indicated by the course syllabus.
- D. The specific methods/types of documentation and verification required will be identified by the appropriate faculty for each course. Faculty assessors retain the right to request additional documentation or verification information from the student during the evaluation process.
- E. Faculty assessors will meet at least once with the student to review the portfolio in depth. Additional meetings may be required to fully evaluate the request for credit.
- F. Faculty assessors should complete portfolio evaluations within 21 days after receiving a portfolio in depth. Additional meetings may be required to fully evaluate the request for credit.
- G. The fee for portfolio assessment is \$30.00 per credit hour which must be paid prior to faculty assessment. An additional fee may be charged for those examination processes where materials are consumed.
- H. Should the faculty assessor and Academic Dean find that the portfolio is equivalent to the Edison State course(s) in question, the course(s) will be posted to the student's transcript without a grade and will be identified as credit via Portfolio.



## **Guide to Portfolio Evaluation**

### **Attachments**

Questionnaire and Assessment Guide for Prospective Portfolio Development Students	p. 10
Sample: Portfolio Organization and Content	p. 11
Step-by-Step Portfolio Process	p. 12
Articles of Documentation for Experiential Learning Activities	p. 13
Application for Prior Learning Credit via Portfolio	p. 14
Portfolio Faculty Evaluation Form	p. 15

## A Questionnaire and Assessment Guide For Prospective Portfolio Development Students

1. Have you taken ENG 121S, Composition I, at Edison State Community College, an equivalent course at another college, or successfully completed the CLEP examination for Freshman College Composition?
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you chosen a major and a specific degree program at Edison State Community College?
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your major and the degree you are pursuing?
  - a. Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Don't Know \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you think you have prior learning experience that relates to courses you will be required to take for your degree or that are acceptable elective courses?
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No \_\_\_\_\_
5. What courses are they? List the ESCC course number and name.
6. Very briefly, describe our learning experiences and how they relate to the above course(s).

*Note: Students should answer Yes to questions 1 through 4 before applying for credit by Portfolio.*

# Sample Portfolio of Extra-Institutional Learning By “Student Name”

## Table of Contents

- I. Application for Prior Learning Credit VIA Portfolio  
This is an administrative form listing the courses for which credit is being sought and verifying that the necessary fees have been paid.
- II. Resume  
A resume, tailored to the career field, should be included. A chronological outline of work, history, skills achieved, and other relevant learning activities should be included.
- III. Transcripts  
Transcripts from all institutions attended, including Edison State Community College, should be included here. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable. Official transcripts must be on file in the Registration Office.
- IV. Course Syllabus  
The Edison State syllabus should be attached with goals identified that will be addressed.
- V. Related Prior Learning Narrative (s)  
A narrative statement relating how the student’s prior learning meets the course objectives – as contained in the course syllabus and described by the instructor during the student’s interview with the instructor. A narrative is required for each course for which credit is being sought.
- VI. Attachments  
Documentation of prior learning that supports the credit request: certificates, supervisor’s evaluations, documents, and materials (photos, tapes, etc.) that may be necessary to demonstrate, support, validate and relate the student’s prior learning to the course objectives for which credit is being sought.
- VII. Additional information as required by the faculty evaluator should be included.

## PROCEDURE FOR PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

Students interested in obtaining “credit for prior learning” through work experience or previous education may have the opportunity to develop a portfolio that demonstrates their learning competencies and how they relate to the class for which they want credit.

### **Step-by-Step Directions for Portfolio Process:**

1. **Student inquires about process.**

Students interested in developing a portfolio should be directed to the Student Affairs Office or the Edison State website to obtain the ***Guide to Portfolio Evaluation***. Faculty and Deans can also help students understand this process.

2. **Student inquires about specific courses.**

The appropriate Dean will direct the student to one or more faculty members depending on the subject area(s) the student is looking at for credit via portfolio. The Dean will alert the faculty member(s) and explain the process. Faculty members are encouraged to establish the minimum level of competency for the course to be considered for portfolio. They may also want to keep samples of successful portfolios on file to share with students. The student meets with each faculty member who gives him/her the appropriate syllabus and explains the course goals. Faculty may need to look at the student’s transcript and degree objective to help choose courses to portfolio. Faculty can either discourage or encourage students to pursue portfolio credit, but at this time should not spend a great deal of time with the student in developing a portfolio.

3. **Student applies.**

Based upon the recommendation of the faculty member, if the student wishes to pursue the portfolio, they will complete the ***Application for Prior Learning Credit via Portfolio***, found in the Portfolio Guide. The student will complete and submit the application to the Cashier’s Office and pay \$30 per credit hour. **NOTE:** Portfolio fees are non-refundable, regardless of credit awarded.

4. **Student determines what documentation is needed.**

Student returns to the faculty member with evidence and ideas to substantiate his or her meeting the goals. Faculty gives guidance. The majority of time spent with the students occurs *after* he or she applies.

5. **Student assembles portfolio. Each portfolio will include:**

- Resume tailored to portfolio.
- Application (showing fee payment).
- Transcripts from all educational institutions
- Copies of official transcripts already on file with Edison State are acceptable.
- Course syllabi.
- Documentation on how student meets each course goal (Attachments would include supervisor letters, work examples, etc.).
- Additional information as required by the faculty evaluator.

6. **Student submits portfolio.**

The student will return the completed portfolio to the appropriate Dean, who will then forward it to the appropriate faculty along with a portfolio evaluation form. Once the evaluation form is returned to the appropriate Dean, the Dean will facilitate the posting of credits through the Registrar’s office. The Dean will process requests for payment for the faculty grader/mentor. The student will be notified by the Registrar’s office via email that credit posted can be viewed in WebAdvisor and the graded portfolio can be picked up in Student Affairs.

## ARTICLES OF DOCUMENTATION FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Work Experience	Job description Awards Letters of documentation from supervisors Promotion evaluations Evidence of promotions Evidence of suggestions adopted Explanation of ranking, rating, or classification system in company or organization Licenses/Scores on Licensing exams/ performance standards for acquiring licenses Membership in professional or trade organizations
Military Records	Military separation papers Rating forms Commendations
Community Service	Activities Awards Newspaper and magazine clippings Letters of Corroboration from co-volunteers, clients, served, supervisors
Non-college Courses and Training	Transcripts Course description (s)/ outline (s) Learning outcomes or objectives of course syllabi Evidence of and criteria for completion of program Certificates of course completion Letter attesting student was enrolled in course Number of didactic hours Number of clinical or practicum hours
Special Accomplishments Specific Subject areas	Patents obtained Programs from performance Projects completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web pages created</li> <li>Business Correspondence</li> <li>Art Portfolios</li> <li>Computer Programs Written</li> <li>Computer Projects Completed</li> <li>Video Tapes of Performances</li> </ul>

**Student Application for Prior Learning Credit  
Via Portfolio**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Student email \_\_\_\_\_

I do hereby apply for prior learning credit via portfolio assessment for the following Edison State Community College courses:

Course No.	Course Title	Credits
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Attached to this form is my completed portfolio which provides the documentation to support my request for the awarding of college credit for prior learning.

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form, process payment (\$30/credit hour) to the Cashier's Office. **Retain form and submit with portfolio to the appropriate Dean.**

***NOTE: Portfolio fees are non-refundable, regardless of credit awarded.***

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(For Office Use Only)

Fees received: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

## Faculty Portfolio Evaluation Form

Directions: Use one form for each discipline being evaluated. Additional pages may be attached, if needed. Route completed evaluation forms and the student's portfolio to the Director of Advising and Transfer for distribution and student notification.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Upon review and evaluation of this student's portfolio, I find the student should be awarded credit as follows:

Course No.	Course Title	Credits	Yes	NO
_____	_____	_____	Yes	No
_____	_____	_____	Yes	No
_____	_____	_____	Yes	No
_____	_____	_____	Yes	No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dean Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(For office use only)

Posted to transcript _____ Date _____
Payment requested _____ Date _____

Distribution of Copies:
Dean
Faculty Evaluator
Student
Student File (Original)