

Portfolio Instructions

Department of Health Sciences

Western Illinois University

January, 2013

The use of student portfolios is a major trend in education in the United States. Portfolios provide a vehicle to help you understand what you have learned and applied. Specifically, a portfolio is a purposeful organization of learner selected evidence of school and non-school accomplishments. As such, it describes relevant public health experiences and achievements during the course of your studies leading to the master's degree.

The portfolio documents your academic, professional and service accomplishments and may include major course papers, projects, reports, presentations, publications and other samples of work you completed. The portfolio is intended to be a useful professional development tool for you as well as a means for WIU faculty to assess educational outcomes.

WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?

The portfolio is a compendium of documents that demonstrate accomplishments during the MS-degree program in the Department of Health Sciences. It contains a collection of your work that exhibits your efforts, progress, achievements, reflections and self-assessment in one or more areas. The portfolio tracks and collects in one location many of the materials you produced during the master's coursework. Thus, the portfolio ties together courses, fieldwork, volunteer and paid work experience with specific core competencies of the MS program. Portfolio development is a process that allows you to collect, select, reflect, build on, and showcase your work! It also makes you aware of skill areas that still need your attention. The portfolio is your property; you decide what to keep in it. It is actually a working file for you.

WHY COMPLETE A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO?

The portfolio serves many functions, among them:

1. To provide a means of self-assessment of your proficiency of core and concentration-specific competencies through master's courses and fieldwork, community service, and paid work experience.
2. To demonstrate to the graduate faculty that you have attained at least entry-level public health competencies in the core public health areas, and/or school health standards.
3. To provide information that will be used by the Council on Education in Public Health to assess the curriculum's effectiveness in providing students with the opportunities necessary to become competent in the core public health areas and in specialized areas.
4. To market yourself by showcasing your professional development, skills and experience. Your portfolio organizes critical information for potential employers while it showcases your accomplishments and abilities. Because learning and development are a continual part of professional life, a portfolio remains useful throughout your career. Keeping copies of your completed Portfolio forms can help you demonstrate the paths you have taken and assist you in determining future growth and career directions.

WHEN IS THE PORTFOLIO DUE?

Final oral presentation of the portfolio must take place at least two weeks prior to the end of the fall or spring semester. A notice will be sent by your committee chair informing the Department of Health Sciences faculty of your oral presentation of the portfolio, to include: date, time, and location. One copy of the proposed final draft of the portfolio must be provided to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the oral presentation. Your portfolio committee chair will preside over the oral presentation. You will be recommended for the degree only if the members of the portfolio committee judge the portfolio and the performance at the final oral presentation to be satisfactory. Your portfolio committee grants final approval of the portfolio and may require whatever modifications or changes they agree are necessary before the portfolio can be accepted.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEWING MY PORTFOLIO?

You will work with a portfolio committee consisting of the portfolio committee chair and two additional faculty members. You must select your portfolio committee prior to the semester you will complete the portfolio. These members must be members of the graduate faculty and they will advise you on the construction of your portfolio document.

HOW DO I ASSEMBLE THE PORTFOLIO?

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. Professional mission statement and professional goals
4. Résumé
5. Experience in governmental public health
6. Community-based service or engagement
7. Other relevant experience/professional development (if applicable)
8. Core competencies
9. Concentration-specific competencies

WHAT DOES EACH SECTION OF THE PORTFOLIO CONTAIN?

1. Title page

This page contains general information for each student.

- Student's full name
- Contact information (address, phone, e-mail, fax)
- Area of specialization (option): Public Health or School Health

2. Table of contents

3. Professional mission statement and professional goals

- State your professional mission and goals.
- Reflect on those mission and goals. As you reflect, you may find that you have refined your mission and goals over time.
- Discuss the extent to which you have realized your mission and achieved your goals.
- Suggest future actions you might take to further realize your mission and goals.

4. Résumé

This page contains a professional résumé.

Minimum requirements include:

- Name
- Contact information
- Education completed
- Public health and other relevant work experience (in reverse chronological order)
- Honors and awards (in reverse chronological order)
- Special skills

5. Experience in governmental public health

This section provides documentation and evidence of commitment and experience in the field of public health.

Minimum requirements include:

1. Certification of IRB training (CITI or NIH certificate)
2. A chronological list of all the public health experiences you have had. Include dates, agency name & address, your supervisor's name, credentials & title, your title and responsibilities. Use these section headings:
 - Paid professional experience
 - Volunteer experience
 - Fieldwork experience
 - Other

6. Community-based service or engagement

This section provides documentation and evidence of community involvement and service outside of the academic environment. Include at least two examples of community involvement.

7. Other relevant experience/professional development (if applicable)

Use this section to present and discuss other topics that have contributed to your professional development. Some examples of additional areas include leadership activities, conferences attended, non-credit courses completed, and track-specific competencies attained outside of your specific area.

8. Core competencies

In this section you will indicate the extent to which you have acquired the core competencies required of all graduates of public health programs.

In the narrative, each core competency will be listed in bold in the order provided, followed by a one to two paragraph narrative about how you have achieved each competency. Provide documentation in an appendix that illustrates how you know the competency has been achieved, such as an assignment in a particular course, a letter acknowledging your paid or volunteer activity, a certificate of completion for a CE course, and so on. Refer to the specific appendix for each item within your narrative.

Program-Wide Core Competencies for the WIU Health Sciences Master of Science

1	Apply the core functions of public health practice (assessment, policy development, and assurance).
2	Describe basic theories, concepts, models and methods from a range of core and related disciplines, and apply them to the design of PH or SH research, policy, and practice.
3	Apply ethical principles and standards when conducting PH activities (e.g. use of information technology; assessment and research; program development, implementation and evaluation; and policy development and analysis).
4	Interpret and apply the literature in public and/or school health.
5	Use basic statistical techniques, and use statistical software to collect, retrieve, analyze and summarize data.
6	Explain key social, behavioral, biomedical and environmental determinants of and inequities in health and disease across the lifespan.
7	Apply appropriate principles and methods to the collection, management and analysis of PH data and to answer research questions.
8	Identify the needs of and collaboratively engage with diverse groups in the US and abroad.
9	Use key program planning constructs (e.g. values, mission, goals, objectives and outcomes) and evaluation to prevent and control Public Health problems.
10	Communicate research findings and recommendations clearly to lay and professional audiences.
11	Evaluate public health programs and health policies, and apply evaluation results to their improvement.
12	Articulate the skills needed for building partnerships and collaborating across programs, organizations and sectors to develop effective public health programs and policies.
13	Identify, obtain, manage and use resources (e.g. equipment, personnel, materials, etc.) in the provision of health programs.
14	Identify, use and critically evaluate assumptions, methods, interpretations, analyses and conclusions in the health literature.
15	Contribute productively as a member of a group and recognize individual strengths, resolve differences and use teamwork as a necessary tool for working with others.
16	Use basic techniques (e.g. bibliographic, database management, graphical and statistical software) to retrieve, analyze, summarize and present study findings
17	Identify key threats to validity (internal and external) within and across health studies.
18	Use online tools, instruments, software, programs and social networking sites to provide information to enable learners to apply knowledge, develop skills, and synthesize health information.

9. Option-specific competencies

The program offers graduate degrees in two options: Public Health and School Health. Evidence of membership in at least one professional organization related to your area of specialization may be provided in this section, if applicable.

Each area of specialization has its own competencies. These concentration-specific competencies specify the skills graduates in a specific area should have in order to receive the master's degree. This section of the portfolio provides documentation and evidence of competence in your specific program. Complete only the section for your specialized program (PH or SH).

In the narrative, each option-specific competency will be listed in bold in the order provided, followed by a one to two paragraph narrative about how you have achieved each competency. Provide documentation in an appendix that illustrates how you know the competency has been achieved, such as an assignment in a particular course, a letter acknowledging your paid or volunteer activity, a certificate of completion for a CE course, and so on. Refer to the specific appendix for each item within your narrative.

Public Health Competencies—to be completed for the Public Health Option

1P. Apply principles of effective communication, by using various media and techniques, applied to different audiences and communities.
2P. Develop and/or incorporate culturally sensitive and age appropriate health education and intervention materials that involve multiethnic populations.
3P. Predict and prevent health, safety and environmental risks from activities related to work sites, the built environment and economic and/or social factors.
4P. Identify and describe environmental and occupational sources of chemical, biological, physical and/or safety (CBPS) hazards, evaluate the human health risks from CBPS hazards, and recommend appropriate personal protection controls and policies.
5P. Identify key sources of epidemiologic data and use measures of disease frequency and association to describe the distribution and determinants of disease.
6P. Draw inferences from epidemiologic data analysis regarding association, causation, public health importance, and policy implications.
7P. Identify key components, such as stakeholders, organizations and agencies and recent trends in health care financing and delivery.
8P. Examine how access, cost and quality of care are affected by the structure and organization of the health care system and reimbursement mechanisms.
9P. Explain the merits of the National Incident Management System.
10P. Explain the intersection of Emergency Management and Public Health.

School Health Competencies—to be completed for the School Health Option

1S. Identify and investigate health problems; formulate and propose solutions supported by evidence for K – 12 students.
2S. Interpret health information and findings, and communicate recommendations to enhance the health status of K– 12 students.
3S. Encourage students’ critical thinking to enable them to question and analyze information to help them make informed decisions about good health.
4S. Use appropriate equipment, computers and networks to access health information for the K –12 population.
5S. Develop a logical scope and sequence plan for a K – 12 health education curriculum.
6S. Formulate appropriate and measurable objectives for K – 12 health instruction.
7S. Design educational programs consistent with specified program objectives to attain the National Health Education Standards.
8S. Evaluate health education lessons/curricula and make modifications consistent with evaluative data.
9S. Develop and use instructional strategies and methods directly related to health behavior outcomes.
10S. Apply instructional approaches that address health determinants of youth, including their social norms, attitudes, beliefs, values and skills that influence health behaviors.
11S. Develop effective curricula which address students’ needs, interests, concerns, developmental and emotional maturity levels, experiences, and current knowledge and skill levels.
12S. Explain the fundamental concepts of health preparedness issues ranging from natural disasters to human intentional injuries; identify appropriate uses of reduction techniques in occupational setting.
13S. Design an egress plan to reduce the incidence of all hazard impact in the occupational setting using primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention techniques for health preparedness issues ranging from natural disasters to human intentional injuries.