



COLLEGE OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Fashion Portfolio Guide

Portfolio Do's & Dont's

DO:

- Play around with variation in color and font to make important information stand out
- Be concise with what information and photos are included
- Include work at all stages of the design process
 - Inspiration, sketching, prototypes/samples, etc.
- Categorize work
- Use a combination of words and imagery to portray a clear voice/message
- Have a good balance of positive and negative space
 - No space wasting or clutter
- Include most important information/most impressive work on the home page
- Make contact information easily accessible
- Make sure elements are consistent throughout entire site

DON'T:

- Distract from work with eye-catching background photos
- Include seemingly unrelated photos and/or other information that does not add to the portfolio's content
 - The "paragraph" portfolio
- Use colors/fonts that are too similar
- Publish before checking for mistakes and typos
- Include cliché steps of the design process
 - The "sticky note" photo

Find more information and example portfolios in our Portfolio Binder by visiting the Career Exploration Center

Photography Tips

Image quality is extremely important in curating a successful portfolio. Poor quality photos make even amazing work seem unprofessional and sloppy. For this reason, there are guidelines to follow in order to make your portfolio as impressive as possible:

- Do not use your cell phone to take photos
 - Mann & Uris Libreres have cameras available to check out
- White backgrounds are commonly used for photos
 - If you choose to use alternative backgrounds, this must be an artistic choice that furthers your design/theme and does not distract from your work
- Make sure you take various shots from different angles
 - Work is typically shown from the front, back and side, accompanied by detail shots (surface details, trims, interesting closure, etc.)

Further Steps to Strengthen Your Portfolio

Developing Your Brand

As a designer, it is incredibly important to develop a personal brand. This means that all of your professional documents and portfolios should contain one, identifiable theme that encompasses your work as a designer. This can be achieved through color schemes, layouts, font types, and related themes for design projects. Your goal should be to develop an instantaneous visual cue that identifies your work as your own.

Creating a Business Card Title

One way to begin developing your personal brand is by identifying the type of work you do, as you would clarify it on a business card. Are you a fashion designer? Colorist? Textile Artist? Childrenswear designer? You can develop any career focus or interest you have into a descriptive title. Once you have this title, you can use it to develop your physical business card. In doing so you will be forced to come to terms with the role you wish to play in the fashion industry as well as to identify some basic layout, font, and color styles. Once you do this, it will become much easier to move forward with your materials as you'll already have a basic starting point from which to expand.

Documenting Your Design Process

It's crucial to document every part of the design process; initial inspiration, sketches, and photographs of your patterns and muslins. While these beginning stages of the design process may not be pretty or clean, they add validity to your portfolio later on because employers want to see how you navigate the design process. This allows them to better understand how you think and how your work develops over time. Take lots of pictures, save your sketches, and be prepared to include the processes that lead to your final product in your portfolio.

Categorizing Your Work

Categorizing work makes it much easier for others to navigate and understand your portfolio. Work can be categorized in many ways such as: medium (garments, paintings/drawings, CAD), stage in the design process (inspiration/mood boards, sketches, muslins, samples, final products), and nature of the project (personal, course-related, research). Choose the way you want to categorize and keep it consistent throughout your portfolio to make it appear the most comprehensive. Keep in mind that it is important to group all the materials for a certain project together so viewers can easily see your process.

Phasing Out Old Work

As you create more professional, college-level work, it is typical to start phasing out less impressive work and pieces from high school. It is better to have fewer strong pieces than to have many pieces that are all average. For this reason, designers usually pick their best, most recent works to be featured in their portfolios to most accurately showcase their current talents and skill level. If you have work from high school that you would still like to include in your portfolio, you can create a section labeled "personal". This signals to viewers that the work in this section does not represent your professional projects, even if it further explains your development as a designer.

Using Multimedia

To take your portfolio to the next level, consider going beyond photographs and sketches. Introducing multimedia to your print or digital portfolio adds much more depth and dimension to your work. Consider creating videos of the design process, including tactile elements such as fabric swatches, introducing audio into website pages to make a multisensory experience, or creating a detailed, composed explanation of your work to communicate your ideas verbally in an artistic way. By including elements in your portfolio that expand on a simple photo, sketch, and explanation, your work will become multidimensional and incredibly strong.