

# Dalhousie University - School of Architecture - BEDS Program

## **A General Note about Portfolios**

Portfolios are records of your design work, research, and abilities. They are prepared and updated periodically throughout your academic and professional career. Assembling a portfolio can help you reflect on your strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and interests. In architecture school, portfolios are prepared in two different editions, each with a particular audience:

- a) A **process portfolio** is a large-format record of your research, analysis, work-in-progress, and finished work for all of your courses. It is developed gradually throughout each term. It is intended for yourself, instructors, and the year-end review committee. In B1, it is a physical portfolio (on paper); in B2, B3, and B5, it is a digital portfolio.
- b) A **job search portfolio** is a sample of your best finished work: about six to twelve pages. It is prepared during the B2/B3 and M2 terms and is intended for prospective work term employers. Guidelines for preparing a job search portfolio are provided in the Co-op Orientation course.

## Digital Process Portfolio (B2, B3, and B5)

### ***Purpose***

Your portfolio is a record of your process work. It is viewed at various times:

- weekly: to yourself, your colleagues in the studio, your design tutor, and your other instructors
- at mid-term and end-of-term: in process portfolio reviews with design tutors
- at the year-end reviews in April: to the committee that considers promotion, graduation, and awards
- after the end of a term: to parents, siblings, and friends you want to impress
- at the beginning of the next term: with your new design tutor

### ***Developing your portfolio***

In each course, your process portfolio should be developed incrementally throughout the term, not left until the end. Before each desk crit with your Design tutor, you can update your process portfolio for discussion. After each desk crit, summarize the discussion and the expectations for your next meeting.

### ***Content***

Work from all courses should be included in your process portfolio: not just final assignments, but also process models, sketches, design/humanities/technology research and analysis, written reflections, collaged images, etc. You needn't include everything you produce. The portfolio will need to be edited and curated to present your work clearly and vividly. For academic integrity, you must cite your sources, including previous architectural designs by others, images from publications, and sketches by your tutor. Group work must list the members of the group. Items without a citation are assumed to be by yourself.

### ***Format***

A digital process portfolio should be in landscape orientation, assembled in InDesign. It will be viewed on a laptop screen or a monitor (1920 x 1080 pixels), so size the text and images accordingly. There is no minimum or maximum number of pages.

### ***Physical items***

During the term, you will be working manually, digitally, and back and forth between them. Manual drawings can be scanned and included in your digital portfolio. Physical models should be photographed promptly.

### ***File management***

At the start of the term, set up a folder structure for storing your files in each course. Use a standard format for naming your files: e.g., **Rep-assignment1-axo2.jpg**.

Back up your files daily in two places, including an off-site location (e.g., OneDrive).

Name your InDesign file: **B2-portfolio-Lastname-Initial-submission#.indd** (e.g., B2-portfolio-Trudeau-J-1.indd).

### ***Portfolio organization***

To guide viewers, please organize your B2 process portfolio with a title/contents page and five chapters:

#### **Title and Contents**

Here is a sample title/contents page:

**Justin Trudeau  
B2 Process Portfolio  
Winter 2024**

**Contents**

1. [Design](#)
2. [Building Technology](#)
3. [Representation](#)
4. [Modern Settlements, Buildings, and Landscapes](#)
5. [Professional Practice](#)

Please start each chapter with a page that includes only the course title, so that it is noticeable when scrolling through the portfolio: e.g.,

**Modern Settlements, Buildings, and Landscapes**

On the title/contents page, add a hyperlink from each chapter title to the first page of the chapter. To do this, right-click the chapter title and select **Hyperlink - New Hyperlink**. Link to: **Page**; **enter the page number**. When you export your InDesign file to PDF, choose **Include** and **Hyperlinks**.

Within each chapter, place your work in chronological order. Add a **heading** at the start of each section or assignment, followed by its components: e.g.,

**Assignment 1: title**

assignment outline  
process work  
finished assignment

**Assignment 2: title**

assignment outline  
process work  
finished assignment

**Assignment 3: final project**

assignment outline  
process work  
finished assignment

***Export InDesign to PDF***

Before submitting your portfolio, export it from InDesign to PDF:

- **File > Save as > Optimized PDF**

and use these image settings:

- **downsample colour and grayscale images to 150 ppi**
- **downsample monochrome images to 300 ppi**

**Practical Tips**

***Content***

- Include the whole span of the assignment: the assignment outline, your process work, and your final product.
- Convert different modes of work (drawings, prints, model photos, videos) into digital files.
- Photograph physical models carefully (well composed, well illuminated, suitable background).
- Include several different views of a model. Include photos of the model during its construction.
- Include your own analytical diagrams or comments next to images of reference buildings/projects.
- Include a graphic scale on each drawing. (Numerical scales are ambiguous.) Include a north arrow on each plan.
- Draw people (rather than geometric shapes or robots) in sections and elevations to illustrate scale and use.
- Explain your intentions and discuss readings and precedents critically. Don't just describe them in a neutral way.
- Use Chicago author-date style to cite references. See the School's Current Students > Writing page for examples.
- Add brief critical comments (what you learned, what you might do differently next time, etc.) after each assignment.

## **Format**

- Use a consistent graphic design throughout the portfolio. This is a good opportunity to learn about and experiment with graphic design.
- Develop a master page in InDesign (margins, columns, headings, text blocks, page numbers) for all pages.
- Include a caption (author, title, date, publication source) below each image that is not your own.
- Use decreasing font sizes for headings, subheadings, captions, and labels.

## **Layout**

- Think of each page as a composition. Compose it to show intentions and emphasis.
- Present an important drawing or exploration on its own page.
- Show design variations side by side; describe what's different and why you chose one over the others.
- Place a plan below a section to imply volume in a hinged way.
- Place upper plans above lower plans to imply volume in a layered way.
- Place a site plan next to a ground floor plan to imply zooming in and out.

## **Photoshop tips**

- Save tonal images in Grayscale mode, 8-bit. Save colour images in RGB mode, 8-bit.
- No image needs to be larger than 1920 x 1080 pixels. Use **Image > Image Size** to reduce large images.
- Don't retain multiple layers unless you will continue to work on the image. Flatten the image into a single layer to minimize its file size.

## **InDesign tips**

- Don't paste images into an InDesign file. Instead, use the Place command to create external links.
- Keep your linked images in the same folder as your InDesign file.
- Use InDesign only for layout. Change image settings in Photoshop before placing an image into InDesign.
- Don't place large images into InDesign and then shrink them, as the file would remain large and slow. Instead, reduce the image size in Photoshop first.

## **References**

- For video examples of process portfolios, go to <https://tinyurl.com/beds-years-3-4> > Process Portfolio.
- For general expectations of a Year 3 process portfolio, go to <https://tinyurl.com/year-3-expectations>.
- For a Year 4 process portfolio, go to <https://tinyurl.com/year-4-expectations>.
- To learn about graphic design, you can refer to these sources:

### **Designers**

- [Edward Tufte](#)
- [Bruce Mau](#)
- [Tibor Kalman](#)
- [Jan Tschichold](#)

### **Pictograms, Icons, and Patterns**

- [AIGA symbol signs](#)
- [The Noun Project](#)

### **Colours**

- [Colour Lovers](#)
- [Colour Picker](#)

### **Books**

- [Lupton, Ellen. \*Thinking with Type\*](#). (Sexton Library)
- [Dabner, David. \*Graphic Design School\*](#). (Sexton Library ebook)
- [Tufte, Edward. \*Envisioning Information\*](#) (Sexton Library reserve)

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