

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.

Physical Process Portfolio (B1)

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
- 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
- at the year-end reviews in April: to the committee that considers promotion, graduation, and awards

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 physical process portfolio is 18" x 24", landscape orientation, and bound into a book format. It should have a hard masonite back and a masonite binding strip on the front. For the backing pages, use kraft paper (rather than newsprint, which tears easily).

A physical portfolio is an exercise in craft. Drawings, tape, and lettering should be trimmed and placed carefully.

Pages should be single-sided. There is no minimum or maximum number of pages.

Throughout the term, the portfolio can be fastened together with large bulldog clips that allow new sheets to be added. At the end of the term, these clips can be replaced with more permanent nuts and bolts.

Physical items

At the start of the term, set up folders for your work in each course. Original drawings should be stored with care.

Drawings can be included in the portfolio as originals or copies, depending on their size.

Physical models should be photographed promptly and then printed.

Portfolio organization

To guide viewers, please organize your B1 process portfolio with a title/contents page and five chapters:

Title and Contents

Here is a sample title/contents page:

Greta Thunberg
B1 Process Portfolio
Fall 2024

Contents

1. Design
2. Building Technology
3. Representation
4. Ancient Settlements, Buildings, and Landscapes
5. Professional Practice

Please start each chapter with a page - perhaps in a different colour - and the course title, so that each chapter is easy to find: e.g.,

Ancient Settlements, Buildings, and Landscapes

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

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 (digital files, model photos, videos, etc.) into prints.
- 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 become ambiguous when a drawing is enlarged or reduced.) 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 (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.
- If you do hand lettering, use light guidelines at the top and bottom of the letters.

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.

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>.
- 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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