



The **UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA**
School of Library and Information Studies

**Student Guide to the Portfolio
For the Master of Library and Information Studies**

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Introduction

The School of Library and Information Studies seeks to provide professional education for persons wishing to prepare for a career in the information profession, to advance professional knowledge by stimulating research, and to encourage a creative attitude toward effective service in libraries and other information agencies and professional activities.

Grades received in coursework constitute one measure of a student's performance in professional education. The portfolio constitutes another, as well as meeting the University requirement to successfully complete such a summative academic evaluation for students who enter the non-thesis option Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) program of the School of Library and Information Studies.

Purpose and Philosophy of the Portfolio

The portfolio assessment is one of three options for the summative academic evaluation required for the MLIS degree. All students entering the MLIS program in fall of 2004 and after have the option of preparing a portfolio, writing a thesis, or taking a comprehensive examination to complete graduation requirements. Students should consult with their faculty advisors during their first semester of enrollment to determine which evaluation is most appropriate for their career goals, and to make program plans and choices accordingly.

The portfolio preparation and presentation is a culminating experience for the MLIS program, comparable to the comprehensive examination or thesis. The portfolio is a presentation of its author's professional self, as developed in the MLIS program. Development of the portfolio is a student driven experience, providing the student with ongoing opportunity for self-reflection, formative self-evaluation, and synthesis and integration of learning experiences. The student presents the recorded form of the portfolio in advance of a culminating experience comprised of an in-person presentation and oral defense to a panel of three.

Though this project is intended to be a culminating experience for study for the MLIS degree, it is also intended to be the first project or activity one carries out as a professional. As a professional, one must meet the requirements of a project or report, to be sure, but also express and carry forward one's own professional objectives and interests. The student should think of two audiences for the portfolio: panel (two faculty members, one practitioner) or a potential employer.

Goals and Objectives of the Portfolio

The general goals of the portfolio assessment are to provide an opportunity to integrate one's learning across the entire LIS program and to develop skills and awareness in the management of one's own professional career.

The specific objectives of the **portfolio assessment** are to present one's cumulative accomplishments in the MLIS program, to reflect on one's significant learning in the program, to reflect on one's career goals and how the work completed in the program has moved one toward those goals, and to demonstrate meeting one's ongoing learning goals.

The objectives of the **portfolio presentation and defense** are to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to organize and synthesize knowledge developed throughout the program as represented by the written portfolio; their knowledge in specific subject areas, with particular attention to areas specified in the written portfolio; their ability to solve problems; and their ability to establish and defend positions on current issues, trends, and problems in library and information studies.

Eligibility for Portfolio Presentation and Defense

The choice of the Portfolio option for the summative academic evaluation must be declared on the student's Program Plan during the student's first semester of enrollment. The portfolio presentation and defense should be done in the last semester of the student's program. Portfolio presentations/defenses will not be done during summer terms. If a student plans to complete the degree in a summer term, he/she should plan on presenting/defending the portfolio in the previous spring semester. A student must be enrolled in at least 2 hours of graduate work in the semester that the portfolio is presented/defended and be admitted to candidacy for the master's degree. To be admitted to candidacy, the student must file a "Program of Study" form with the Graduate College. The form is submitted through the SLIS office. A student must have completed all the required courses and be in good academic standing. Incomplete (I) grades from previous semesters must be removed within 2 weeks in advance of the date of the portfolio presentation. If an incomplete is received in the semester during which the portfolio is presented, it must be removed within 6 months of the end of the semester or the portfolio will have to be presented a second time.

Registration for the Portfolio Defense and Presentation

Near the beginning of each semester, students will receive an e-mail from the SLIS office informing them of the deadlines for registering to present the portfolio, and a link to the Program of Study form on the Graduate College website. Students will receive instructions for completing this form, printing, signing and returning it to the SLIS office by approximately the third Friday of September for those taking the exam in a spring semester and near the third Friday of March for those taking the exam in the fall semester. The declaration of intent to present the portfolio form should be submitted early in the semester in which you will present/defend your portfolio, and must be signed by your portfolio advisor before being submitted to the SLIS office. The application for graduation and the permanent alumni card should be submitted in the last semester of a student's program. Students will be instructed to request these forms from the SLIS office in Norman. They are also available at the Graduate College office in Tulsa and from the academic records office in Norman. Norman students will submit these forms to the academic records office in Buchanan Hall, and Tulsa students will submit them to the graduate college in Tulsa. Caps and gowns for both Norman and Tulsa students can be purchased through the Norman bookstore, and purchase of the academic regalia is optional.

Students will receive notification by the email when the "Program of Study" has been filed in the Graduate College. Final approval of eligibility to take the exam comes from the Graduate College (Authority Report Form), and students will be notified by the SLIS Office when that form has been received.

Portfolio Preparation

As the portfolio is to demonstrate the growth and reflection of the student during the MLIS program, it is highly advisable to anticipate this project from the beginning of the program. In a meeting with the advisor each semester, the student identifies current interests and goals for learning and notes where those interests and objectives have changed. Such reflection throughout the program greatly enhances the quality of the final result.

Example goals for learning:

- To become familiar with career options in museums.
- To learn how public libraries can help adults acquire literacy skills.
- To acquire the minimum knowledge and skills needed to work as a cataloger in an academic library.
- To complete the requirements for Oklahoma School Library Media Specialist certification.
- To become proficient in multimedia design and development.
- To develop a personal code of practice based on recognized professional codes.
- To identify resources for continued professional development and lifelong learning.

By the end of the first semester the student should have identified the student's individual goals and objectives for the master's program. These goals should be established by considering the student's career goals, published professional standards and competency statements, SLIS student goals and objectives, and the faculty advisor's recommendations. Such goals may change as one progresses through the program; part of the portfolio preparation is to be able to articulate professional objectives and the motivations that lead to changes in them.

In this process, the advisor should be an important source of information and mentoring. If the advisor relationship is not fulfilling in this regard, the student should request a change of advisor. As the advisor will head the review panel for the presentation and defense of the portfolio, the student should have the advisor review the portfolio in advance, in order to obtain recommendations for any revisions prior to the presentation and defense.

Responsibilities of Advisor and Student

The faculty advisor shall be available for consultation regarding program planning and course selection, planning for independent studies (directed reading, directed research, directed project, and internship enrollments), and for guidance on professional preparation.

The faculty advisor advising the portfolio meets with a student at least once a semester, however, it is the student's responsibility to initiate the meeting and prepare necessary materials to move forward a successful completion of the portfolio.

SLIS office staff can assist with the enrollment process/procedures and with completion of the documentation required for end of program assessments and with graduation.

Components of the Portfolio

1. Statement of individual learning goals and objectives for the program
2. Self-assessment
 - An initial self-assessment that indicates strengths and weaknesses across the determined goals and objectives.
 - Student's description/definition of area of specialization, with a statement of achievements to date.
 - Student's general statement of achievement in the program, outlining how he/she has met personal goals for learning through coursework, internships, professional activities, and/or other extracurricular activities (see 3a. and 3.b).
 - Statement of goals for continuing education.
 - Self-assessment of participation in professional, organizational, and other service activities.
 - Statement of professional goals.
 - Self-assessment of student's leadership potential.
3. Examples of student work
 - One or more examples of work from each required course.
 - One or more examples of work from elective courses in the area of specialization.
4. A record of the student's advising history, documenting feedback from the advisor during the master's program.
5. A professional résumé.
6. Any other supporting documentation that the student wishes to present

Portfolio Submission

Portfolio presentations are made in fall and spring semesters only. Students normally make presentations in their final semester in the program. Those completing work in summer present the portfolio in the preceding spring semester.

Students wishing to present their portfolios must meet these requirements:

- Must be in good academic standing, i.e., minimum cumulative GPA = 3.0
- Must have finished taking required courses
- All incompletes completed

Students must notify the SLIS office of intent to present the portfolio no later than the eighth week of the term before they intend to present.

Three sets of the digital media containing the portfolio are due to the SLIS office by the third week of the term in which the portfolio is to be presented.

The presentation copy goes to the advisor.

The standard format for the portfolio is digital. Written (paper-based) instructions noting the technical support needed for presentation should be included. (See Appendix 2, “Portfolio Submission Checklist.”)

Portfolio Presentation and Defense

The review panel consists of the student’s advisor, one additional faculty member, and one practitioner. The student and faculty advisor will identify an appropriate practitioner to serve as an external evaluator and submit the proposed evaluator’s name and curriculum vitae (by the second week of the term in which the portfolio is to be presented) to the SLIS Director. The Director will provide final appointment of SLIS faculty members for fall and spring portfolio review panels, balancing faculty workloads. Where possible, a good match among practitioner, faculty and students’ interests should be sought, although the only absolute requirement is that the advisor chair the review panel. It is the responsibility of the student, after approval of the panel is received from the advisor, to consult with the advisor to schedule the date and time for the presentation and defense. Portfolio copies must be given to the review panel at least one week in advance of the scheduled presentation and defense.

The portfolio presentation and defense normally are scheduled for one hour. The first five minutes or so are devoted to a discussion among the panel without the student present; the next 20 minutes are for the presentation to the panel; and the final 35 minutes are for the panel questions to the student and discussion of the student responses. It is the obligation of the student (and, if need be, the advisor) to limit the presentation to the allotted time. However, the panel may, at their discretion, extend the question and discussion portion of the defense. The defense, which is open to the public, is not to be scheduled during the period of final course examinations or at any time when the committee cannot be assembled.

Ordinarily, the presentation includes a brief statement of the student's accomplishments in the LIS program, a description of the student's professional goals, and a highlight of one example of student work, which may be presented in any format. The review panel may question the student about any aspect of the portfolio and about current issues and knowledge that are relevant to the student’s professional practice. The review panel and the student may conclude with a brief discussion of the student's academic work and professional goals.

Portfolio Evaluation

Review panels evaluate the portfolio on the following points (see “Portfolio Evaluation Guidelines”):

- Completeness
- Overall quality of student course work presented
- Evidence of student reflection on academic work, progress towards meeting professional goals, and future plans
- Appearance of portfolio
- Oral presentation

Response to panel questions indicating mastery of a body of knowledge, ability to synthesize the elements of the portfolio, problem solving skills and the ability to contextualize and relate knowledge to the current political, social, and technological environment.

The review panel assigns one of two grades: Pass or Fail (See “Portfolio Evaluation Summary”). The review panel makes written comments to justify assignment of Pass or Fail evaluations to the portfolio.

Compilation and recording of these comments are the responsibility of the advisor who will pass them on to the student.

Students who fail must correct problems and make a successful portfolio presentation and defense in order to graduate. If the sources of failure are modest, the panel will give recommended revisions to the advisor, who will oversee the student's reworking of the portfolio. If the sources of failure are major, or if a student with modest problems wishes to take longer to revise the portfolio, then the student must enroll for a minimum of two hours in the next semester and present and defend the portfolio again in the usually scheduled time period for presentations. A portfolio may not be presented and defended more than two times.

Students are notified in writing within two weeks of presenting the portfolio whether they have passed.

Academic Appeals Procedures

The Graduate College Bulletin states, "A Graduate College Academic Appeals Board will be appointed and given authority to hear all appeals involving qualifying examinations, non-thesis examinations, general examinations, theses and dissertations, and other appropriate matters as determined by the dean of the Graduate College." See the Graduate College Bulletin for more information about [Academic Appeals](#) and Graduate College Standards.

Reasonable Accommodations

The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Any student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities in defense of the portfolio should contact the OU Disability Resource Center to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate educational opportunities. The OU Disability Resource Center accepts requests from students for reasonable accommodation after the student has self-identified as an individual with a disability and has provided the appropriate documentation that substantiates both the disability and the request for accommodation. Accommodations are not retroactive and begin only after documentation is received and a reasonable time for accommodation development has been allowed. For more information see:

- [Norman Campus OU Disability Resource Center](#)
- On the OU-Tulsa campus, students should contact the OU-Tulsa Student Affairs located in Room 1C 53 (phone 918-660-3100)

Additional Forms and Documents

Related forms and documents found on the SLIS website are:

- Declaration of Intent to Present the Portfolio
- Portfolio Evaluation Guidelines
- Portfolio Evaluation Summary
- Portfolio Submission Checklist