Professional School of Psychology

Portfolio Manual for Master's Degree Students

Version 1.4

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio process encompasses all educational activities between admissions into the Master's of Arts (M.A.) program and beginning of preparation for Thesis work or M.A. comprehensive exam.. Educational activities serve two functions with regard to the Portfolio process: (a) to help you, the student, acquire competencies associated with each of six roles (competency clusters), and (b) to help you document the competencies acquired during the program or that you possessed prior to entering the School.

How to Use This Manual

This manual is designed and written for face-to-face training sessions between students who are just beginning their Portfolios and students or faculty who have experience with the Portfolio process. Reading about the Portfolio and understanding what it will look like is much easier when samples Portfolios are reviewed and students are available to discuss their process. The authors encourage you to review this manual before your face- to-face session but also please do not be discouraged if it is confusing for you. Once you begin to work with your Portfolio, it will be much easier to understand the instructions contained here.

Purpose of a Portfolio

The Portfolio is an option in lieu of completion of a formal supervised internship. A Portfolio process consists of three components. First, a series of competency categories is established to determine what will be evaluated. Second, a set of documents is developed and collected by you throughout your coursework. Third, your Portfolio Advisor reviews and approves the Portfolio.

The purpose of the Portfolio is to:

1. Be a comprehensive learning assessmenttool;
2. Demonstrate successful attainment of Master's level competency;
3. Fulfill a requirement for a Master's degree.

2. PORTFOLIO PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Portfolio consists of two parts, which represent a comprehensive picture of a student’s competencies. The first part are documents written expressly for the Portfolio. These documents outline the learning objectives and competency role selection rationale, and then a reflective document summarizing the progress made and key learnings. The second part of the Portfolio consists of documentary sources with student reflections on the relevance of each document to the particular role being assessed by the portfolio advisor.

3. ROLE OF THE PORTFOLIO ADVISOR

The Portfolio Advisor is selected by each student in consultation with Dean of the Student’s program. The role of the Portfolio Advisor is to:

1. Provide different perspectives to guide your learning;
2. Assist in assessing your strengths and areas of potential learning;
3. Challenge your personal assumptions that may otherwise limit your learning;
4. Give final approval and sign off on the Portfolio.

4. PERSONAL PORTFOLIO PLAN

Your Portfolio plan is a document that will assist you in the successful completion of your Portfolio and will serve as a guide throughout your Master’s program. The first step is for you to decide on which competencies of six critical Organizational and Clinical roles you want to focus on. The six roles are Teacher, Researcher, Scholar, Leader, Interventionist, and Advocate. The first three roles (teacher, researcher, and scholar) will primarily, although not exclusively, encompass the formal course work taken at PSP. The other three roles (interventionist, leader, and advocate) will primarily, although not exclusively, encompass experiences in the field and formal educational and training experiences outside PSP.

5. SIX ROLES

Teacher

A PSP MA graduate should be knowledgeable about and expert in applying learning theory, learning styles, adult development, cultural factors, alternative learning strategies, and assessment processes. The teacher must also be skillful in performing reflective practice, group facilitation and appreciative inquiry. Possible document(s) : (1) delivery of training program, (2) working with a client or family and providing them with information for their use to improve life conditions, (3) doing a presentation as part of PSP course.

Researcher

A PSP MA graduate should be knowledgeable about and have effectively applied the scientific method as applied to psychological work, as well as both qualitative and quantitative methodology. They also need to acquire skills related to interpretation, writing, analyzing, evaluating, hypothesizing, focusing, and organizing information.

Possible document(s): (1) PSP essay that builds on information you have gathered from conducting interviews or observing something, (2) report you have prepared that offers data you have gathered, (3) outcome report on human services you have provided (or your agency has provided).

Scholar

A PSP MA graduate should be knowledgeable about and have demonstrated use of databases, multi-cultural frameworks, and sources of information, philosophy, and psychological theory. The requisite skills of scholarship include synthesis, modeling, critical thinking, evaluation, reframing, application, and inquiry.

Possible document(s): (1) PSP essay that builds on the theories, concepts or evidence provided by someone else who is an "expert" in his/her field, (2) review of findings from some area of psychology, (3) essay that compares several different perspectives on a psychological issue.

Leader

A PSP MA graduate must be knowledgeable about the dynamics of complex systems and institutional history and culture. They must also possess the skills of facilitation, strategic, tactical and contingency planning, systems thinking, team building, and problem solving. Leaders must know how to clarify and articulate institutional vision, manage conflict, make decisions, and design temporary systems that provide both challenge and support.

Possible Document(s): (1) evidence that you have provided direction and overseen the operations of a specific department or organization, (2) evidence that you have led a specific project from its inception to completion, (3) essay you have written regarding specific leadership theory or strategy, (4) biographical essay about a notable leader and lessons to be learned from this leader.

Interventionist

A PSP MA graduate should acquire knowledge and show evidence of work in the following areas: professional work with an individual, group or organization. Knowledgeable about models of intervention.
Possible Document(s): (1) evidence that you have provided at least 150 hours as a therapist, counsellor or consultant, (2) case study prepared for PSP regarding specific work you have done with a client, (3) letter of commendation by someone supervising your work as a professional human service provider.

Advocate

A PSP MA graduate should be knowledgeable about and shown evidence of work in community development, political systems, sources and nature of power, diffusion of innovation, alternative frames of reference, and the theories and strategies of change involving under-served populations. Complimentary skills include clarifying values, negotiating, reflecting, communication, leveraging, persuading, networking, and building alliances.
Possible Document(s): (1) PSP essay regarding the perspectives, human service needs and/or strategies for influencing decisions regarding a specific under-served population in your country, (2) actions taken in a skillful manner on behalf of the welfare of a specific group of people in your community, (3) volunteer (non-paid) work with a specific population in your community that addresses an important (often unacknowledged) human service need.

While each of the courses in this program is designed to focus explicitly on developing competency in one or more of these roles, you need to decide which roles will be your personal background roles (Level One), your intermediate interest roles (Level Two), and your primary focus roles (Level Three). This selection will then guide the gathering of assessment documentation for your Portfolio.

Level One

Two of the six roles will be identified as of minimal importance to the student, either because the student has already mastered this cluster of competencies or because this role will be of less relevance to the student in the near future than that of the other roles. These two roles will be labeled a Level One Competency Cluster. Background roles are those that hold little opportunity for growth for you. While you will need to demonstrate competency in these roles, it may be that your experience in organizations or other practice has already given you the opportunity to develop adequate competency in these roles.

Level Two

Two of the six roles will be identified as of moderate importance to you because this role offers some challenge or because it is likely to be of some importance in the near future. These two roles will be labeled a Level Two Competency Cluster. Intermediate focus roles, while still important to you, are roles that, for whatever reason, hold less growth potential for you. It may be that you have acted in these roles in the past, or it may be that you are familiar with these roles through other life experiences.

Level Three

Two of the roles will be identified as of greatest importance to you either because you find this cluster of competencies to be a great challenge or because these roles may be of great relevance in the near future. These two roles will be labeled a Level Three Competency Cluster. Your primary focus roles are those roles that you find most compelling and that hold the most promise for your personal and professional growth. These are the roles that you will focus on when assessing your progress and reflecting on any mid-course corrections that you might wish to make during the program. Level Three roles also require more documentation sources than Level One or Level Two roles.

6. SELECTING FOCUS ROLES

The next step in building your personal Portfolio plan is to select your primary focus, intermediate focus, and background roles. The questions below are starting points to help you begin this process.

1. Which role is the most compelling for you? Which is the role that you would like to learn about most? Which role represents the most growth for you? This would be your primary focus role (#1).
2. Which role is the least compelling for you? With which role are you most familiar? This would be

your background role (#6).

3. Which of the remaining roles draws your interest the most? Which of the remaining roles do you know the least about? If, when working in an organization, you chose to accept one of the remaining roles, which would cause you to stretch the most in fulfilling its requirements? This could be your second primary focus role (#2).
4. Of the remaining roles, which seems the most familiar to you? Which of the remaining roles have you played often? Which of the remaining roles is least interesting to you? This could be another background focus role for you (#5).
5. List the two roles that you have not yet selected for your intermediate focus roles (#3 and #4).

Primary focus roles will require detailed assessment documentation in your Portfolio. Intermediate focus roles will require less detailed assessment documentation in your Portfolio. Background roles will only require low-level assessment documentation in your Portfolio.

7. PORTFOLIO STRUCTURE

Your personal Portfolio should be structured so that each role is documented for the level of emphasis determined by the student for competency. Appendix B may serve as an example in planning the level of effort required to demonstrate competency at each level. Students may either plan ahead what kind of documentary source they would like to produce in a given course, or students may choose to simply identify best work samples as they are completed. Whatever method a student chooses, at the end of the program, the Portfolio must have the required number and types of documentation for the courses.

Portfolio Entries

As you work with your Advisor to set documentation requirements, have them consider what types of documentation are available and produced as a natural result of your work, both in the work place and through school. Consider the purpose for which the documentation is to be collected and its suitability for that purpose. Ideally, Portfolio documentation is something that arises as a natural byproduct of your efforts, not something separate that is done outside of the moment for the sole purpose of meeting Portfolio requirements. The Portfolio’s purpose is to organize meaningful documentation in a useful structure, not to create busy work at the last minute.

Although most sources are written documents of some kind, the documentary source types are distinguished by the type of experience represented. One documentary source may include several documents depending on the competency and level of the role. The documentary source types are:

1. Topical Paper: A paper focused on a specific topic to explore, compare and contrast, postulate, explain or summarize a body of knowledge.
2. Action or Experiential: A body of knowledge gained through an activity or experience that can be demonstrated through various means such as a video or audio tape, an evaluation, a paper, reports, proposals, analytical documents, etc. Evaluations from participants are often part of these source types.
3. Presentation and Participation: A demonstrated ability to educate and influence others using Organizational and Clinical psychology expertise through a video or audio tape, presentation materials, training curriculum, etc. Evaluations from participants are often important for these source types.
4. Reflection and After Action: A retrospective analysis of previous activities or experiences that focuses on lessons learned, what worked, or personal meaning of those activities through video or audio tape, artistic expression, written paper, etc.

The Portfolio will contain a minimum of fourteen documentary sources, two sources for each Level One Role (total of at least four documents), two for each Level Two Role (total of at least four documents), and three for each Level Three role (total of at least six documents).

Table 1. Roles and Documentary Sources

Role	Level 0 *(required regardless of Focus Roles selected)*	One Source to document Level 1, 2, or 3 attainment	Total Portfolio Minimum Sources
Teacher	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Lesson plan, teaching materials • Paper documenting the teaching process including student evaluations	2
Researcher	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Examination copy • Research article copy • Additional coursework Sample	2
Scholar	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Additional coursework Sample • Examination copy • Article copy	2
Interventionist	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Field work documentation (products) and outcome evaluations • Paper discussing field work	2
Leader	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Field work documentation (products) and outcome evaluations • Paper discussing field work	2
Advocate	One Source Related to Coursework	Example: • Field work documentation (products) and outcome evaluations • Paper discussing field work	2
Total Minimum Documentary Sources			**14** Consisting of: 4 Level 1 Sources 4 Level 2 Sources 6 Level 3 Sources

The important thing to remember when building a Portfolio is the purpose of the Portfolio—a Portfolio serves to help students acquire and document competency! Students can include more than 14 documentary sources and the nature of the sources will naturally vary depending upon the focus and activities chosen. However, a well-rounded Portfolio should contain a sampling of each documentary source.

8. PROCESS FOR PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Once you have developed your personal Portfolio plan, you will want your Advisor to review it. Ask your Advisor to review the plan and provide comments to you. During this review process, you may want the Advisor's help in probing your assumptions around Organizational and Clinical roles, the nature of your strengths, your selection of documentation and activities, or other elements of the Portfolio plan. They should also help you assess the structure and proposed content of your Portfolio: Does it provide a useful format for identifying, reviewing, assessing, and sharing your goals and accomplishments throughout the program? Does it stretch your skills? Is it appreciative or deficit based? Does it promote building from your strengths?

Conscientious and appreciatively constructive Advisor comments can be essential in building a Portfolio with generative properties that support your learning within and beyond your Master's work. Additional instructions for your Advisor are in Appendix D.

For many, it is interesting to maintain a history of Portfolio changes as a part of the Portfolio. Reviewing the history once the Portfolio is completed can be a rare and valuable opportunity to reflect on changing personal perspective and understanding over time. Understanding this yourself will enable you to better help others in any of the six roles you take upon yourself.

Each documentary source will be assessed in the following categories, and will be evaluated on the level of work (Level 1, 2, 3). At the end of the program, your Advisor will review the final Portfolio to ensure completeness.

9. COMPLETED PORTFOLIO

The final Portfolio should be a complete picture of the student's work and learning and evaluation by the Advisor. The following format is recommended in order to cover the material needed for a comprehensive Portfolio. The student may modify this format as long as the intent and scope of the documentation is accomplished.

I. Introduction

- Background information about the student
- Why the student choose this course of study
- Background letter to the school
- Personal learning objectives

II. Focus Roles

- Discussion of selection of focus roles

III. Personal Learning Summary

- How did the student grow in the roles? Reflect on the beginning and end of the learning process. How is theory used to inform practice?
- What does the student consider to be his/her best work?
- What was learned through the Portfolio Process?
- What was the biggest surprise or disappointment that surfaced through the Portfolio Process?

IV. Advisor Summary

- Overall comments about the student, learning, etc.

V. Documentary Sources

- A summary sheet of levels, sources, and types
- A Documentary Source Review & Approval Form is required from the Portfolio Advisor

APPENDIX A: ROLE DOCUMENTATION

This chart serves as an example of the type of documentation that may be included in the Portfolio:

Table 3. Role Documentation

Role	Level 0 *(required regardless of Focus Roles selected)*	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Teacher	Complete Course Work	Teaching Assistantship or Presenter in one PSP graduate level course	Co-teach a PSP course ** Conduct a staff training in an organization	Design and teach a Mini-Course/Workshop (e.g. January Intercession, Summer Institute, Continuing Education Program)
Researcher	Complete Course Work	Complete Course Work	Pass a Research Comprehensive Exam	Submit a Research Based Article (e.g. report on original findings) for publication.
Scholar	Complete Course Work	Complete Course Work	Pass Scholarship Comprehensive Exam	Submit scholarship-based article (e.g. synthesis of existing research) for publication.
Interventionist	Complete Course Work	Complete 250 hours of field experience (within own organization); complete case conference (reflective practice).	Complete 500 hours of field experience (within own organization or another organization) and case conference. **	Develop a comprehensive methodology for an intervention within an organization. Utilize the model at least once, write a case study and present it to a class.
Leader	Complete Course Work	Document an experience when you were an effective leader. Discuss insights, what worked, and what you would change.	Complete 500 hours of field experience and case conference. **	Compete 750 hours of field experience, case conference, and 25-hour program outside of PSP focusing on personal and or professional growth.
Advocate	Complete Course Work	Complete 250 hours of field experience and case conference.	Work with a consultant, trainer or coach as a shadow. Document what you saw and learned. Present it to a class. **	Complete 750 hours of field experience, case conference, and 25-hour program outside of PSP focusing on personal and/or professional growth.

** Participant/client evaluations recommended

APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTIONS TO PORTFOLIO ADVISOR

The role of the Portfolio Advisor in reviewing Portfolio entries and documentary sources is to provide evaluative feedback of the source based on the criteria outlined in the Portfolio. Please review the entries in preparation for answering the following questions:

- Do the individual documentary sources meet the competency level of the role?
- Do all the sources as an aggregate demonstrate competency of the role at the level submitted?

Please note that:

- Any comments written directly on the source are for student reflection only and will not necessarily become part of the final Portfolio.

The Advisor should write comments to be included in the final Portfolio on the Approval Form. If evaluation feedback includes the need to augment documentary sources or other Portfolio documents, the student is then responsible for incorporating all suggestions and edits required to gain approval of the Portfolio Advisor.

To provide further guidance for you as Portfolio Advisor we offer the following description (taken from the PSP SLOAP Manual) as a way of assessing the quality (critical thinking) of each Portfolio document (with regard to each of the three levels)

Portfolio Assessment with Emphasis on Three Levels of Critical Thinking

Each student prepares a portfolio prior to being advanced to candidacy. The portfolio consists of documents regarding six roles of the professional psychologist: (1) researcher, (2) scholar, (3) interventionist, (4) teacher, (5) advocate and (6) leader. In two areas, the student is to demonstrate understanding, in two areas both understanding and competence, and in two areas, understanding, competence and mastery.

Level One: Understanding

The Context: in working toward Understanding in a specific role, the student will be preparing to effectively represent himself/herself as broadly knowledgeable in a specific human service discipline and with regard to a specific role. Understanding is about acquiring the background and appreciating the central questions associated with a specific discipline, a specific domain of human service and a specific role within this domain.

The Value Statement: in working toward Understanding in a specific role, the student is expected to be directed toward the goal of Being Articulate in the World. They have gained knowledge in many areas related to their field of interest and can enter into informed discussions concerning the challenges and opportunities within this field.

Nature of the Product/Service: Understanding is evident in work prepared by the student that demonstrates the ability to apply concepts from multiple perspectives within their discipline, human service field and specific role. The student is seeking to become a credible representative in a specific discipline -- beyond just the field of human service for which they are preparing or in which they already work (but wish to be more effective and credible).

Typical Evidence; (1) work prepared for a specific course, (2) project reports, program plans or position papers being prepared for a specific institution, (3) articles written for publication in a digital library that applies some concept(s) from their discipline to a specific problem or challenge in a specific human service field, (4) case study providing multiple perspectives (informed by several subspecialties in their discipline) that inform the building of an action plan to address the issues embedded in this case.

Level Two: Competence

The Context: in working toward Competence in a specific role, the student will often be seeking to prepare for licensing in a specific professional field or building evidence of professional-level skills and knowledge in the performance of this role. Competence is about "meeting the requirements" and becoming a successful professional contributor to a specific domain of human service.

The Value Statement: in working toward Competence in a specific role, the student is expected to be directed toward the goal of Being Good IN the World (obtaining skills and knowledge that specifically is aligned with the student's personal needs, interests and career/life goals). Perseverance and openness to new learning and challenging perspectives, as well as the acquisition of advanced human service skills are evident in the work being done by this student in their performance of this role. The student is seeking to be a successful contributor to a field of human service that is of benefit to many people over an extended period of time.

Nature of the Product/Service: Competence is evident in the crafting of a product or provision of a service that meets the standards of high quality in the role being assessed. The work being done is preparing the student to effectively engage the world. The student is expected to provide evident that they have the ability to do what it is that they need to do in order to be successful in their professional work.

Typical Evidence; (1) take a case from beginning to end—walking through and demonstrating competence at each step (2) completion of series of courses related to a specific professional endeavor culminating in some practical demonstration of integrated competence (3) performance (role play) in a simulated setting, (4) active and sustained work in a human service institution with concrete evidence of successful practice.

Level Three: Mastery

The Context: in working toward Mastery in a specific role, the student would usually have also been awarded a license or some other document regarding competency in the performance of this role. Mastery is about "going beyond the requirements" and becoming a unique and highly beneficial contributor to a specific domain of human service.

The Value Statement: in working toward Mastery in this role, the student is expected to be directed toward the goal of Being Good FOR the World (above and beyond personal needs and interests). Intense interest, sustained commitment and dedication – even passion—are evident in the work being done by this student in their performance of this role. The student is seeking to leave a "mark" – a legacy – that is of benefit to many people over an extended period of time.

Nature of the Product/Service: Mastery is evident in a product or service that makes a real difference and is truly ground-breaking: innovative, new, distinctive, generative. Performance that provides evidence of not only mastery of theory and practice, but also creative intuition. Something with a "WOW" factor—a product or service that builds on skills and crafts currently being engaged by other people, but moves beyond the current state to something unique.

Typical Evidence; (1) completion of major project that is being acknowledged, used and even honored by outside constituency, (2) published essay on established website (3) published book, (4) series of articles in a refereed journal, (5) guidebook for use in specific human service field, (6) major institutional transformation or creation of an institution.