

Building a Quality Portfolio

In order to receive an Iowa teaching license (and a license in most other states), you must provide evidence that you can perform as a quality beginning teacher. At William Penn University, you do this by completing a portfolio. The portfolio will become a collection of 32 entries in which you demonstrate (1) knowledge, (2) skills, and (3) dispositions/behaviors that good teachers possess. The faculty and staff have been making some changes in the way portfolios are organized, hoping to clarify the process and provide a better match with the standards that Iowa teachers must meet. This handout should help you select appropriate artifacts (entries) for your portfolio and assist you in writing rationales that will be acceptable and highlight the many positive aspects of your performance as a teacher education graduate.

Purpose of the Portfolio

1. To demonstrate your ability to perform satisfactorily as a beginning teacher
2. To demonstrate your ability to apply the eight standards to a variety of teaching and learning situations
3. To meet the Iowa state requirements for teacher licensure

Choosing an Artifact

1. Carefully read each of the eight standards and the bulleted lists that begin with *The William Penn Education Student*. You should clearly understand which knowledge, skill(s), or disposition(s) your artifacts must demonstrate.
2. Look at the list of required artifacts for each standard. They are easily identified by the check-off box next to each. Most standards require you to submit three artifacts prior to student teaching; some require two. Occasionally, elementary and secondary majors will have slightly different required artifacts.
3. Select an artifact that matches the standard and satisfies one of the required artifacts listed at the bottom of the page (those with the check-off boxes).
4. Examine what you have selected to ensure you are planning to submit your best work.

Writing the Rationale

1. Think of the rationale as a bridge that joins the standard to the artifact you are putting in your portfolio. Give serious thought to why you are matching the artifact you have selected to a particular standard.
2. Your rationale should explain *why* you chose this particular artifact and *how* it demonstrates that you have met the standard.
3. If you cannot provide a good reason for placing a piece of work in a given section, then it probably doesn't belong there. Look for another place it might fit or look for a different piece of work.

Example Rationale – This student has decided to include a floor plan or classroom model with Standard 6. Standard 6 requires that the student “demonstrate competence in classroom management”. A “classroom floor plan accompanied by a key and a rationale for the design” is also an item with a check-off box. Notice that this student explains her artifact and justifies how it belongs with Standard 6.

I have included this floor plan in my portfolio under Standard 6 because it demonstrates my ability to create a learning environment in which students can be actively engaged in learning. I have arranged the desks in groups of four so students can work together on cooperative learning projects. They can also pair up with a peer helper for partner projects. This encourages social interaction and active learning. If I want students to work independently they can pull the desks back and work alone. I have adapted my floor plan for individual needs. I did this by placing the student with an attention problem with a group of students who are good role models. Also, I put this group near my desk where I can help them stay focused. The student who has a vision problem is placed in the front of the class near the white board. I also have included a round table in the back of the room where I can work with individuals or a small group of students who have special needs.