

## PORTFOLIO FORMAT

The preparation of a portfolio is an exercise in self-evaluation, introspection, and synthesis. It can be an educational experience in itself. It requires you to relate your past learning experiences to your educational goals, to exhibit critical self-analysis, and to demonstrate your ability to organize documentation in a clear, concise manner. Remember, MCTC acknowledges credit for prior learning, not for prior experience. As you begin to assemble and write your portfolio, periodically check to make certain you have described learning in addition to experience. In this respect, your portfolio will differ from a resume, which describes what you did rather than what you learned.

Although your portfolio will represent learning that is unique to your experience, there is a prescribed format to be followed. It is important that you keep to this format while developing a carefully organized and well-written document. Those who will evaluate your portfolio must be able to follow it logically and identify substantiating evidence (documentation) easily.

*\*Adapted from A Student Guide for Applying for Credit for Prior Learning, Sinclair Community College.*

**Portfolio Components:** The completed portfolio consists of four basic components.

1. **APPLICATION** and **AUTHENTICITY STATEMENT**
2. **RESUME** of your relevant experiences to the course(s) credit being applied for.
3. **CHECKSHEET OF COMPETENCIES** for each course. A course syllabus is at the front of this section.
4. **DOCUMENTATION** of the learning experience substantiating each competency area described.

If more than one course is being documented within the portfolio, the first two components need not be repeated; a checklist of competencies and documentation section is submitted for each separate course.

### 1. APPLICATION FOR ASSESSMENT and AUTHENTICITY STATEMENT

The Application for Assessment is the first document to appear in your portfolio. It clearly and concisely sets forth your petition for academic credit based on the competencies presented in your portfolio.

The faculty evaluator will make the final judgment as to the course(s) where credit will be awarded, but you are expected to evaluate your own work and make a specific credit request. The credit request will evolve as you work through the portfolio development.

In preparing the Application, use the following format

- List the MCTC department, course number, course title and credit requested when the Learning Outcomes of your competency are similar to a course offered at the MCTC.
- Read and sign Authenticity Statement and include in Section 1 of your profile.

### 2. RESUME

Submit a resume of your experiences. Consider the following items for your resume:

- **WORK** would include any activity for which you were paid, including military service.
- **NON-CREDIT COURSES AND SEMINARS** would include in-service training, workshops, clinics, conferences, discussion groups, evening courses, lecture series, television or radio courses, correspondence courses, etc. (For which no academic credit was given).
- **Other significant life learning experiences.**

### 3. CHECKSHEET OF COURSE COMPETENCIES

For each course, you will need to complete a Checksheet of Course Competencies. You can get these sheets from your Academic Advisor. Indicate on the Checksheet how you are verifying each learned competency – through work experience, training, narrative, skills demonstration or interview. See sample Checksheet of Course Competencies.

### 4. DOCUMENTATION

Back-up documentation is needed for each competency on the checksheet. Documentation of learning from experience is essential to the award of credit. It is the process by which you verify that you have had the experiences and acquired the competencies you claim. It is imperative that you provide sufficient documentation for each course competency so an evaluator can accurately assess your learning in each area.

You will outline the LEARNING achieved as a result of life experiences. It is critically important to make this section of your portfolio a strong representation of your learning and how it was achieved. It must be specific to learning, concisely stated, clearly and logically developed.

In preparing your documentation, keep in mind that:

- Multiple documents for each competency may be necessary. However, remember thickness does not necessarily denote quality.
- Excessive documentation, attractively presented, will not substitute for weak articulation of learning from your experience.
- If actual products such as canvases, pottery, or machines are to be used as documentation, these should be photographed or reduced to slides. The evaluator will notify you if presentation of the original products is needed to complete the assessment process.
- Products or replicas submitted in the portfolio should be labeled, signed, and dated.
- Any valuable documents such as licenses, certificates, letters, or commendations should be copied for use in the portfolio. Present these original documents only if requested. The originals will then be returned to you.

*Note regarding deception:* Periodic checks are made of documentation. Any incidences of misrepresentation will result in a denial of all credit. MCTC has the authority to withdraw previously awarded credit should it learn of deception after the credit has been awarded.

**Work Experience:** Learning from prior work or personal experience can be verified in a number of ways. One of the most common is the use of third party validation letters from a supervisor who has had firsthand knowledge of your learning or skills. Other means of documenting your learning are suggested on “Documentation Alternatives.”

**Training:** Previous training experiences, on-the-job or elsewhere may have provided you with new skills and knowledge that warrant college-level learning. Documentation for training could include certificates, CEU certificates, in-house training records or other related forms of documentation.

**Narrative:** It may be necessary to document your competency attainment through a narrative description of your learning. A well-written statement of learning outcomes describes learning in terms of what you know and can do. It should be clear, specific, and observable. It should also describe a skill or knowledge that can be applied in more than one situation. Finally, a good statement should be written in such a way that you can readily demonstrate the competence to another person.

Identifying what you have learned and substantiating through evidence is at the heart of learning how to learn. Since the focus is on what was learned rather than how it was learned or taught, it is more important that you be able to provide evidence that you have learned. To do this, it is necessary to describe the learning in a way that can be observed and evaluated.

The easiest way to write good learning outcome statements is to go from the general to the specific. You might start your statement with one of the following “learning terms.” Notice the importance of personalizing your portfolio by the use of the word “I.”

I developed the skill of . . .

I know and can apply . . .

I became aware of . . .

Now make it more specific by asking yourself:

What do I need to know in a specific field?

What can I do that would show someone else what I have learned?

### **Some Verbs to Consider**

Here are some verbs that might help you be more specific in developing your statement:

participate	write	apply	name
establish	identify	use	order
interview	design	interpret	describe
counsel	develop	translate	construct
help	organize	analyze	distinguish

\*\*Adapted from the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning handbook by Aubrey Forrest: *Assessing Prior Learning — A CAEL Student Guide*.

**Skills Demonstration or Interview:** The fourth way to verify course competency achievement is through a skills demonstration or interview with a faculty evaluator. Consult your academic advisor to initiate this process and documentation.