



Learning Portfolios:

A Checklist for Instructors

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This checklist is a condensed version of *Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors*, which is available on the [UZH Teaching Tools website](#) or [here](#). It may be used independently or in combination with the *Guide*.

Prior to the Course

Note: It is advisable to go through steps 1 to 5 at least twice in order to double-check and fine-tune the concept for learning portfolios.

Chapter 1 – Basic Mapping: Learning Outcomes and Types of Assessment

- Have I checked the general learning outcomes and assessment types as stipulated by the official module catalog (and departmental regulations)?
- In addition to the more general learning outcomes stipulated in the module catalog, have I compiled a list of more specific aims for my own course?
- Can I map each of the learning outcomes onto one or more of the assessment types (i.e. do I understand which learning aim is being tested and assessed where and how)?

→ *More on learning aims and mapping can be found in chapter 1 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*

Chapter 2 – Workload: How Much Is Feasible?

- Have I calculated how much time students are expected to work for the module based on the number of ECTS points?
- Have I carefully considered how much/ which proportion of the students' overall workload can realistically be devoted to the learning portfolio (e.g. given its weight for the overall grade)?
- Have I taken into consideration my capacity as an instructor for correcting, grading, and giving feedback (as well as any other persons who might be involved in grading etc.)?
- Have I considered whether it makes sense to incorporate peer feedback? And, if peer feedback is incorporated, have I considered how it affects both student and instructor workload (especially in large classes)?

→ *More on realistic workloads can be found in chapter 2 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*

Chapter 3 – Types of Portfolio: Pedagogical Strategies and Learning Process

- Does the learning portfolio correspond to one of the four basic types, i.e. (1) additive, (2) complementary, (3) sequential, and (4) selective-reflective?
- If **additive**, does it make sense for all of the tasks to be independent of each other and not to lead to an overall product or skill set?
- If **complementary**, can students best achieve the learning aims if they compile one final product that (a) consists of components which complement each other and (b) where the order in which the 'component tasks' are completed doesn't matter (much)?
- If **sequential**, can the skill set that students ultimately need to acquire be reached only in a series of steps that build/ depend on each other (i.e. that must be completed in a given sequence)?
- If **selective-reflective**, is self-reflection about learning outcomes and processes an important part of what I want my students to do?

→ *More on the types of portfolios can be found in chapter 3 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*



Chapter 4 – Specific Tasks: Timeline and Organization

- Is the number of specific tasks that I have decided to use in the learning portfolio feasible and appropriate? (Too many small tasks can seem burdensome and pointless to students, while two or three very complex tasks can seem overwhelming to them.)
- Is there a sufficient degree of variation between the types of tasks? (There should be at least two different types because tasks of the same type do not 'feel' like a learning *portfolio*.)
- Have I considered including an element of choice in the learning portfolio (e.g. students have to do only four out of five tasks)?
- Do I understand the links between the learning portfolio tasks and the other types of tasks assessed in my course (e.g. how the learning portfolio relates to, e.g., the paper or final exam)?
- Have I considered how these tasks relate to skills from earlier modules in the curriculum? (Is there reason to believe that students are equipped with the required skills and knowledge to complete these tasks? Are the tasks challenging and interesting for students at this particular level of study?)

→ *More on specific tasks and links can be found in chapter 4 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*

Chapter 5 – Grading Criteria: Transparency and Fairness

- Have I implemented a grading system that (a) complies with the relevant regulations and (b) will be easy for me as an instructor to use?
- Have I compiled a precise and reasonably objective set of grading criteria for each task?
- If group grades are to be considered, have I checked whether the departmental and/or faculty regulations allow for group grading? Do the learning aims justify grading students collectively?
- Have I considered whether the quality of students' revisions should have an effect on the overall grade? (Will I grade only final versions, only draft versions, or both for some/all the tasks?)
- Do my grading criteria correspond to the logic and aims of the learning portfolio I have designed?

→ *More on grading criteria can be found in chapter 5 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*

Reminder: It is advisable to repeat steps 1 to 5 at least once in order to double-check and fine-tune.

During and after the Course

Chapter 6 – Communicating: Why, What, When, and How?

- Do I have a clear plan for how I can use the mapping of the learning aims onto the learning portfolio tasks to help me communicate the tasks and their purposes to my course participants?
- Do I have a plan for communicating the grading criteria and all deadlines *before* the end of the booking/cancellation period?
- Have I considered which information should be shared when? (Is it better to communicate all the information at the same time, or should it be broken down into smaller segments to be shared at different times?)
- In addition to communicating all these points orally and/or in emails, have I prepared a written document containing *all* the key information that is accessible to all course participants / students (*before* the end of the booking/cancellation period)?

→ *More on communication can be found in chapter 6 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*

Chapter 7 – Feedback and Evaluation: Learning from Experience

- Does my timeline for providing feedback allow students to react to my comments and to implement changes? (This is especially important whenever the feedback could help students complete subsequent tasks.)
- Have I ensured that the students know where, when, and how they can receive additional feedback? Or have I explained when and why they cannot receive additional feedback?
- Have I determined which (if any) feedback processes might provide me with implicit course evaluations? Have I considered the limitations of using feedback processes as 'substitute evaluations'?
- Have I decided which of the steps outlined in this checklist can also help me provide more precise feedback and which steps can help me formulate fruitful questions for the course evaluation?

→ *More on feedback and evaluation can be found in chapter 7 of the Learning Portfolios: A Guide for Instructors.*