

# **Geography Department Portfolio Requirement for the Master's Degree (Non-thesis Option)**

## **Purpose of Portfolio**

Building a portfolio is a creative and structured opportunity to pull together in one place your best papers, maps, site designs, graphic presentations, or internship projects. The portfolio requirement will provide each graduate student with evidence of quality work over time, seen in a variety of ways. The set of experiences you will have during your master's program will be made clear and unified through this process. The improvement of your spatial analytic skills is an achievement that will be reflected in these works. The portfolio assessment is our attempt to provide you with concrete evidence of your skills and to encourage you to synthesize what you have gained from the program you selected.

Your portfolio will be a collection of materials appropriate to take to a job interview, to carry to prospective Ph.D. programs, or for use as a reference during your career.

## **Things to Consider in Selection of Works for Portfolio**

- Quality over Quantity
- Works with Potential for Revisions
- Eye Toward Job Interview or Graduate School Materials
- Variety of Selections
- Begin Early to Collect, Sort, Organize, Revise and Reflect on Class Work
- A Professionally Appearing Document

## **Portfolio Contents**

**Suggested items for inclusion:** Posters or papers presented at professional meetings, maps, term papers, site plans, digitally processed satellite images, photographs, spread sheet analysis, graphic presentations (charts & diagrams), or internship projects.

**Required items include:** at least one paper, at least one map, and at least one other graphic presentation. The map and graphic presentations may be included as part of a paper or they may be separate items in your portfolio. In addition to the pieces selected for your portfolio, you will need to include a 5-10 page reflective essay. A workshop explaining how to write the a reflective piece will be conducted before the portfolio is due. The essay will be written in suitable scholarly format with appropriate citations. Topics to be included in your reflection are 1) how and why the selections for your portfolio were made, 2) in what ways you improved the works, and 3) how you have grown as a professional geographer, cartographer, or planner during your time at IUP. Finally, your specific program goals are an appropriate integrating theme for your reflective essay.

## **Faculty Portfolio Committee**

Your committee will advise you during your graduate program and will evaluate your portfolio upon completion. The committee will have three members: 1) the graduate coordinator, 2) your advisor, and 3) a faculty member of your choice. If the graduate coordinator is your advisor, then you select two faculty members. Your advisor was assigned to you by the graduate coordinator at the time you were admitted based on your interests presented in your goal

statement. You may decide to change your advisor if you feel that another faculty member is better suited to your research interests. See the graduate coordinator or the department secretary for the form to change advisors.

Students will meet with the coordinator and their advisor by the end of the first week of classes. At this meeting your goals and plan of study will be laid out in concert with anticipated department class schedules over the next four semesters.

### **Steps in Portfolio Development**

1. Initial advising interview where portfolio requirement is discussed.
2. Selection of portfolio committee member(s) by the end of the first semester.
3. Committee and student develop a written plan at the beginning of second semester.
4. Selection of works to be included—ongoing.
5. Attendance at a graduate student meeting on writing the reflective paper.
6. Meeting with committee at least six weeks before due date.
7. Write reflective document.
8. Submit portfolio by the deadline (the end of the first week of classes of the semester you scheduled to graduate). Only a serious medical excuse is a valid reason for missing this deadline.
9. Attendance at a feedback session with portfolio committee.
10. If requested, make improvements to portfolio and resubmit.
11. Approval/acceptance of portfolio by faculty committee will occur within 30 days of submission. At least two out of three of the faculty members must favor approval of the portfolio.

### **Highly Recommended Supportive Activities**

- Student membership in a professional organization such as:

Association of American Geographers	Institute for Land Policy
National Council for Geographic Education	Urban Land Institute
American Planning Association/Pennsylvania Planning	PA Geographic Society
- Attend a professional meeting.
- Present a paper or poster at a professional meeting.
- Involvement in Department Seminar Series.
- Attendance at a local planning commission meeting or other grassroots organizations such as the Blacklick Watershed Association.

### **Appeal of Portfolio Assessment Decision**

If you are unsatisfied with the assessment decision of your faculty portfolio committee, you will need to appeal the decision to the chair of the department. Within 10 days after the assessment, you need to file a formal appeal with the graduate coordinator and the chair of the department. The chair will appoint three different faculty members who will render a second assessment of the portfolio.

It is important to remember that the portfolio is a non-graded professional requirement intended as physical evidence of your transfer from graduate student status to potential geographer--planner—cartographer in the workplace or in readiness for your next degree.