**Information About Psychology E-Portfolios**

As you advance in your major, your psychology-related knowledge and skills will grow in a variety of different areas. In order to help you recognize and reflect on that growth, you will begin work on an e-portfolio of your learning when you enter the major, and complete your portfolio by the end of your senior capstone course.

***How are e-portfolios useful?***

E-portfolios are a unique tool that allows you to track your own growth as a student of psychological science. It is incredibly rewarding to see your hard work paying dividends via your abilities to converse fluently about psychological theories and findings, evaluate and produce psychological research, communicate your ideas clearly and professionally, and so on.

Additionally, graduate admissions committees and employers often want to see evidence of the knowledge and skills you claim to have (e.g., writing samples, evidence of statistical skills). E-portfolios are a great way of organizing such evidence for yourself, and because you can make your e-portfolio public, it can also be a great way to *present* that evidence to potential programs/employers—for instance, you can include a link to your e-portfolio on your resume or CV.

***Making your e-portfolio work for you.***

The psychology major offers you a wide range of possible experiences, from the classes you choose to take, to the experiential learning opportunities you have (e.g., study abroad, service learning, internships, research). Your e-portfolio should be a reflection of *your* unique experiences, framed in terms of *your* specific values, interests, and goals.

You have great flexibility in what you choose to include. We ask that you include a handful of required assignments (detailed below), but beyond that, you simply need to provide some form of evidence—from any source you think is most relevant (classes, research, internships, etc.)—in each of the 5 areas discussed below, and a short reflection detailing how and why that evidence demonstrates what you know and what skills you have. The requirements described below refer to what your **completed** portfolio should include (by the end of Research Seminar), but that you will add to this incrementally as you progress through your major.

***What do I need to include in my e-portfolio?***

**Overall structure: Evidence + Reflection.** In each of the **five learning outcomes** represented in your portfolio, you should include at least one (for some outcomes, two) piece(s) of evidence of your learning (e.g., an assignment excerpt, a description of an experience in a research lab or during an internship), and a corresponding reflection in which you articulate how and why this showcases your learning. Please be specific in your reflections; make sure that the person reading it can not only get a sense of your knowledge, but also your ability to articulate what you know and why it’s valuable and relevant to your personal goals and interests. **(See the last page of this document for examples of how to present and reflect on evidence of your learning.)**

1. **Discipline knowledge.** You will graduate with knowledge of the theories and major findings in the four psychological domains: cognitive, social, biological, and developmental psychology. In this section of your e-portfolio, you should provide evidence of knowledge in at least two of the four domain areas (cognitive, social, biological, and developmental psychology).
	* ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. One piece of evidence for each of two domains (two total) illustrating your learning
		2. A short reflection for each piece of evidence in which you discuss how the excerpt/experience demonstrates your knowledge in that domain.
	* ***Additional suggested content:*** At least two excerpts/descriptions per domain, one nearer to the beginning of your educations, and one nearer to the end. This will allow you (and others) to see the growth you experienced throughout the program.
2. **Inquiry skills/Critical thinking.** In addition to the *content* of psychological science, psychology students are expected to graduate with an exceptional understanding of the *methods* of the discipline. This includes the ability to critique and design psychological studies, to analyze data, and to interpret and critically evaluate psychological findings.
	* ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. An excerpt from a paper demonstrating your statistical knowledge (can be from Research Seminar)
		2. An excerpt from your final paper from Research Seminar demonstrating your research skills
		3. Accompanying reflections on how these excerpts demonstrate your mastery of inquiry skills.
	* ***Additional suggested content:*** Excerpts/descriptions from other classes or experiences (e.g., a research lab or internship) that demonstrate your mastery of inquiry skills and critical thinking, especially if they are sampled from early and late in your educational experience, as this will demonstrate growth.
3. **Ethical reasoning.** By the time you graduate, you will have had a variety of experiences—in classes and beyond—that relate to your ability to reason about ethical conduct, and make decisions ethically.
	* ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. Your NIH or CITI training certificate of completion (you will complete this in Research Seminar)
		2. An assignment excerpt or experience description that demonstrates your ability to apply ethical principles to solve problems or navigate novel situations (usually from Research Methods)
		3. Accompanying reflections on how the ethics training course and other assignment/experience facilitated your ability to reason and make decisions ethically.
	* ***Additional suggested content:*** At least one additional piece of evidence of applied ethical reasoning, ideally one from an earlier or later point in your educational experience relative to the other piece of evidence, as this will allow you to demonstrate growth.
4. **Oral and written communication.** Many classes you will take will require you to write research proposals or reports, literature reviews, and other forms of professional writing, as well as creating professional presentations. You may even participate in an independent study, and write a paper or create an oral defense of your project. Choose the best exemplars of your professional writing and presentation skills for your e-portfolio.
	* ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. An excerpt demonstrating written communication skills (will usually be your proposal from Research Methods)
		2. An excerpt demonstrating oral communication skills (e.g., a PPT slide, video, or description of an oral presentation).
		3. Reflections that analyze the strengths showcased in these pieces of evidence (e.g., What in particular is strong about the writing example you chose? What aspects of oral communication did you refine in the presentation you included/described?)
	* ***Additional suggested content:*** Two additional excerpts that would help readers to see growth in these domains (for instance, you could pull your best excerpts from a freshman writing-intensive class and compare these to excerpts from a senior level class).
5. **Professional development (Home tab).** Throughout your college education, you should be actively connecting the knowledge and skills you acquire with long-term professional goals. This section of your e-portfolio is designed to tell the story of who you were when you arrived at Roanoke College, who you want to be when you leave, and how your experiences here helped you to progress toward your goals.
	* ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. **Basic Information.** On the “Home” page, include some basic information about yourself, including where you are from, your major, minor(s), and concentration(s) as appropriate, and a picture.
		2. **Mission Statements.** At minimum, you should write two mission statements (one during Research Methods, and one during Research Seminar). These statements should describe your current goals at the time, the experiences you have had so far that are relevant to these goals, and the experiences you hope to have in the near future that will further help you toward these goals.
		3. **Courses.** Keep an up-to-date list of your completed psychology courses in this section.
		4. **Curriculum Vitae/Resume.** Depending on whether you are planning to pursue graduate study or enter the job market directly after graduation, you may choose to include either a CV or a resume here.
	* ***Additional suggested content:***
		1. **Mission Statements.** Write a mission statement each year. You may want to write a retrospective mission statement from the perspective of your freshman self, describing what your expectations and goals were upon entering college. Each year thereafter, write a new statement in which you describe your experiences during the past year and how they connected to your growth and your long-term goals, and what experiences you plan to have during the upcoming year (again, as they connect to your long-term goals).
		2. **Experiential Learning.** Use this page to elaborate on your applied or experiential learning to demonstrate your professional development. You can list out your experiences on the main page and then create separate pages for experiences you would like to elaborate upon. (A subpage has been already been created for your use on the portfolio template, but you are welcome to add more.) Include excerpts, reflections, pictures, etc. that showcase experiences you have had in classes, research, internships, and so on that have brought you closer to your professional goals.
	* **Note:** There is a “Completed Papers and Projects” section that may be helpful in tracking your development. This section is not part of our requirements, but you may find it useful to store assignments, reflection papers, or other materials here that can be excerpted or included in your main portfolio later. **You may hide this page from others** **if you do not wish your full assignments to be widely accessible; directions for doing this are included in the psychology e-portfolio template.**

***When should each of these pieces be completed?***

You will add pieces of evidence to your e-portfolio incrementally as you progress through the program, and we’ll check on your progress at two points. You may also have additional classes that require a particular assignment to be uploaded to your portfolio.

* ***Research Methods (PSYC 202/205).*** At this point, we expect that you will have evidence of learning in at least 3 of the 5 areas of learning.
	+ ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. An excerpt from your research proposal from Research Methods, with reflection (see area 4);
		2. An excerpt from/description of an assignment or experience that demonstrates your ethical reasoning skills, with reflection (see area 3);
		3. A mission and reflection statement on your current progress toward your long-term goals and your plans for the coming year to further progress toward those goals (see area 5.2);
		4. An up-to-date list of the psychology classes that you have completed, as well as any other classes that you consider particularly important to your long-term goals (see area 5.3).
		5. Up-to-date basic information about yourself (see area 5.1).
	+ ***Additional suggested content:*** We suggest that you try to find something that would be relevant to each learning outcome. Even if you think that you don’t have very much knowledge of, for instance, social psychology yet, you probably know *something* about it, and you can probably identify an assignment or experience that demonstrates your knowledge. Go ahead and complete that section now, with the understanding that later on you will be able to add an even better piece of evidence to this section.
* ***Research Seminar (PSYC 410/415/430).*** By the end of this class, you should have a complete e-portfolio; thus, **in addition to the requirements presented above in Research Methods**, you should add the following pieces of evidence.
	+ ***Minimum submission requirements:***
		1. An excerpt from your final research report in Research Seminar, with reflection (see area 2);
		2. Excerpts from or descriptions of assignments or experiences that demonstrate your knowledge in different domains of psychological knowledge, with reflections (see area 1);
		3. Your NIH or CITI training certificate of completion, with reflection (see area 3);
		4. An excerpt or description demonstrating your ability to apply ethical principles to solve problems or navigate professional situations, with reflection (see area 3);
		5. Excerpts/descriptions demonstrating your written and oral communication skills, with reflections (see area 4);
		6. A second mission and reflection statement regarding how your education has prepared you for your long-term goals (see area 5);
		7. An up-to-date list of the psychology classes that you have completed (see area 5);
		8. An up-to-date CV or resume (see area 5).
	+ ***Additional suggested content:*** Ideally, your final e-portfolio will fully demonstrate who you are, what you have taken from the experiences you have had, and your progress since your freshman year. In order to do that, you need to have evidence from multiple points in your educational experience: some early, and some from later. We hope that as you complete classes and have other goal-relevant experiences, you will store them in the “Complete Papers and Assignments” tab of your portfolio, and return to them later to pull excerpts and reflect on how much your skills have improved.

***What will happen if I don’t complete my e-portfolio?***

Because we believe that e-portfolios uniquely contribute to the learning and overall experience of psychology students, and because we use e-portfolios to assess our effectiveness in preparing students for their futures, it is a departmental requirement that students complete their e-portfolios by the end of Research Seminar. For this reason, at least 5% of your final grade in Research Seminar will be devoted to your e-portfolio.

***Where can I go if I have questions about my e-portfolio?***

If you’re having trouble figuring out how to navigate or add to your e-portfolio, or if you have any questions about the psychology department’s requirements, feel free to check out the e-portfolio resources on the psychology department’s website, or contact the psychology department’s e-portfolio fellow. Their contact details, including open office hours, can be found on the psychology department’s webpage: <https://www.roanoke.edu/inside/a-z_index/psychology/students/e-portfolio>

**Examples of How to Present and Reflect on Evidence of Your Learning**

**Example 1:** Using an **Assignment Excerpt** to Demonstrate Knowledge of **Biological Psychology**

**Class:** Health Psychology

**Professor:** Dr. Smith

**Semester:** Fall 2010

**Assignment Description:** Term paper on the relationship between psychosocial stress and the metabolic syndrome.

**Paper Excerpt:**

“Chronic stress impacts the efficacy of the satiety hormones leptin and insulin (Andrews & Walker, 1999; Darmon et al., 2006). Specifically, it contributes leptin insensitivity (i.e., the release of leptin from fat cells no longer produces feelings of satiety, as it normally would) and insulin resistance (i.e., insulin is no longer able to effectively regulate blood glucose levels), both of which have a number of harmful consequences. First, because leptin is directly released from fat cells, high leptin levels (indicating large amounts of stored energy) normally inhibit further feeding (Harris, 2000), and also prevent further energy storage in the form of adipose tissue (Friedman & Halaas, 1998). However, for someone experiencing leptin insensitivity, the body does not properly interpret this signal, and consequently believes that it is “starving,” despite high levels of circulating leptin. It thus continues to signal hunger, and to store glucose as adipose tissue, thus contributing to excess accumulation of abdominal fat. Additionally, leptin resistance produces an inflammatory response in adipose tissue to accommodate the expansion of fat cells and thus prevent damage to the cells (Hamilton, Pagila, Kwan, & Deital, 1995). This too contributes to adiposity, due to the fact that the fat cells expand past the point that they normally would.”

**Reflection:**

This paper required me to write a comprehensive literature review regarding the multifaceted ways in which psychosocial stress interacts with physiological systems to impact health. I reviewed indirect ways in which these variables are related (e.g., effects on eating, exercise, and other health-related behaviors), as well as several direct links (e.g., the effects of elevated cortisol). Reading about and writing an integrative review on this topic facilitated a deep understanding of a number of physiological systems (e.g., endocrinology, satiety mechanisms) and their reciprocal relationships with psychological and social function. Given that the interplay between mental and physiological states is of core interest within biological psychology, my ability to write fluently about these concepts clearly evidences my mastery of foundational concepts within this area.

**Example 2:** Using an **Experience Description** to Demonstrate Knowledge of **Developmental Psychology**

**Class: Evolutionary Psychology**

**Professor: Dr. Jones**

**Semester: Fall 2009**

**Assignment Description:** A class presentation on the topic of incest avoidance mechanisms.

**Description:**

For this assignment, I was required to find empirical research articles relevant to the topic of how humans avoid close kin as mates, and to give a 45-minute presentation summarizing the key theoretical reasons for incest avoidance, and the empirical evidence for a particular adaptation that humans have evolved to avoid incest. The research that I reviewed and integrated into my presentation demonstrated that humans seem to use close association early in life as a mechanism to distinguish close kin; when a child lives with or has extensive contact with another child prior to the age of 10, they tend to consider them undesirable as a mate later in life. This assignment required me to learn about critical periods in development in which these preferences solidify, and to integrate findings from several articles into a clear presentation for my classmates.

**Reflection:**

While EP wasn't a "developmental psychology" class, it did draw on fundamental concepts in developmental psychology (e.g., how early life events impact people later, critical developmental periods). This presentation in particular required me to learn about a particular developmental process, a sort of "reverse imprinting" that seems to take place in young children that functions to help us avoid genetically related others as mates. Researchers tend to think about this as an example of a "critical period" in human development, during which a child's experiences influence their psychology later in life. In this way, I gained mastery in an area of research that is underpinned by explicitly developmental concepts.