

# MPA ePORTFOLIO Road Map 2021-2022

## Overview

As a student in the MPA Program, you are required to develop an ePortfolio that demonstrates your mastery of each of NASPAA's "Universal Competencies" around which the MPA program is structured. The MPA ePortfolio is the culminating experience of the MPA Program.

The five MPA core competencies include the ability:

- 1) To lead and manage in public governance
- 2) To participate in and contribute to the policy process
- 3) To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
- 4) To articulate and apply a public service perspective
- 5) To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Additional specifics on each of the five core competencies of the MPA Program can be found here:

<http://www.cla.auburn.edu/polisci/graduate-programs/mpa/about-the-program/portfolio/>

Your ePortfolio must contain artifacts that demonstrate your proficiency in these five areas of core competency. In addition, your ePortfolio may also be used to identify your professional goals, and can incorporate artifacts that showcase your preparedness for accomplishing those goals. Typically, your professional goals will focus on attaining a position of employment in public service. However, you may also decide to use your ePortfolio to pursue an additional internship, or gain entry into an additional program of higher education.

Your artifacts will be examples of work that you select from your MPA coursework (core courses, concentration courses and electives) and experiences (internship, research project, service learning and volunteer projects, etc.) to communicate with a professional audience about how this experience relates to your goals. You will begin developing your ePortfolio during your first semester in the program. The ePortfolio is then intended to be developed and improved during your two years in the Auburn MPA program – it is iterative, and will involve scaffolding and revision of course assignments. You will finalize and present your ePortfolio during your last semester in the program.

## Why an ePortfolio?

The MPA ePortfolio gives students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of key public service principles, concepts, and tools. When completed, the MPA ePortfolio provides students with a vehicle to showcase their best work in the MPA program and to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of public administration concepts.

The benefits of an ePortfolio include:

- Ability to showcase essential knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired throughout your time in the MPA Program
- Ability to showcase professional experience acquired throughout your time in the MPA program (internship, service learning, employment, etc.)
- Clarity in understanding yourself, such as who you are, what you want and what you have to offer
- Recognition and integration of your graduate experience as a result of identifying how it relates to your future

- Capacity to organize your thinking about your skills and experience when presenting yourself as a candidate for a desired position
- Ability to create a unified, coherent and professional story about yourself by identifying how your various graduate experiences connect with one another
- Skills in developing an accurate presentation of yourself and your qualifications through a professional website that is easily accessible by a professional audience

### **Developing your Artifacts**

To successfully finalize your MPA ePortfolio prior to completing the program, you will need to plan and collect artifacts beforehand. This Road Map will help you identify opportunities available in your MPA core classes for developing artifacts for inclusion in your ePortfolio, although all of the artifacts may not be useful for your purposes. In addition, you may also include artifacts from your other MPA experiences, such as from concentration and elective coursework, internship, and service learning/volunteer projects. You must select artifacts that demonstrate your aptitude in the five core MPA competencies. You may also select additional artifacts based on your personal goals and the professional identity you plan to portray in the ePortfolio. You will use your artifacts to represent yourself as a member of a professional audience and to provide evidence of who you are, what you know and how you are prepared to accomplish your goals.

An overview of opportunities in MPA course classes for developing and collecting artifacts is included here. Specific course assignments may vary depending upon the instructor. The general principles outlined above, however, apply regardless of the specific assignment you complete. In developing artifacts for your ePortfolio, it will be most helpful if you focus your assignments on topics and areas related to your professional goals whenever possible. For example, if you think your professional goals involve working in local government, or the nonprofit sector, or in election administration, include assignments as artifacts that showcase your knowledge, skills, and abilities in that sector. Make your course work meaningful and useful to you.

Course Number	Course Name	Example Artifact Opportunities
POLI 7000	Research Methods for Public and Nonprofit Organizations	1) Research Paper/Project 2) PPT and/or video of Research Paper presentation
POLI 7140	Financial Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations	1) Group Project: Budget Preparation and Adoption Exercise 2) PPT and/or video of Group Project presentation
POLI 7150	Public Personnel Administration	1) Performance Evaluation/Appraisal 2) Sample Job Description 3) Cultural Competency Memo 4) Employee Recruitment Memo
POLI 7330	Administrative Leadership and Democratic Governance	1) Leadership Profile/Reflection 2) Ethics Reflection 3) Applications and Innovation Assignment 4) Team Building Memo
POLI 7350	Foundations of Public Administration and Public Service	1) Issues in Public Administration Paper 2) Issues in Public administration Newsletter
POLI 7360	Foundations of Public Policy	1) Policy Memo 2) Problem Definition Memo 3) Policy Alternative Analysis 4) PPT/Video Presentation(s)
POLI 7920	Internship Experience	1) Work products from internship

Note: All documents should be revised per instructor recommendations prior to publication in the ePortfolio. Any track changes should be removed. Documents that are used as artifacts must be included as PDFs.

### Additional Artifacts

You will also include artifacts from other MPA courses, such as electives and concentration and certificate courses, from your internship experience, and from service learning experiences. Additional artifact opportunities include academic lectures, programs or conferences you presented at, travel abroad, employment, or any other experience that supports your professional goals and fits with your ePortfolio. The types of artifacts you include in your ePortfolio are limited only by your imagination. Other types of artifacts you may incorporate into your ePortfolio include: photographs of yourself in a professional setting, PowerPoint presentations, Prezis, videos, blog entries, conference presentations, membership in professional organizations, certifications, etc.

### Archiving Your Artifacts

As you work toward completion of your final ePortfolio, you will need to set-up a system for saving and organizing your potential artifacts. Start this process early in your MPA program. **You can use a hard drive, jump drive, Drop Box, iCloud, Google Drive or any other reliable means of storing your artifacts for later use.** Having a back-up storage system can prevent loss of important information. Organizing your artifacts into meaningful categories, or groupings, also can be helpful. For example, you may want to use an organization or grouping system that reflects what you want to demonstrate about yourself and/or one that is consistent with the layout of your ePortfolio.

### Selecting Your Artifacts

In selecting your artifacts, consider your professional goals and what you want to demonstrate about yourself. What skills, experience or learning do you want to convey? You also will want to consider your audience: target what your audience may want to see when evaluating how well you fit with their expectations. Every artifact included in your ePortfolio should be clearly related to your goals. Keep in mind that your ePortfolio is a work in progress. You will want to add and possibly remove artifacts at various points of development. On-going

development of your ePortfolio will minimize the amount of time you have to devote to it during the end of your MPA program.

### **Contextualizing your Artifacts through Reflection**

You will need to apply critical thinking through reflection to provide the reader with context for understanding why you included a particular artifact in the ePortfolio and how it applies to your professional goals. Never leave the audience wondering why you included an artifact in your ePortfolio. Critical thinking through reflection provides contextualization for the audience. Reflections are brief introductions that tell the reader why you have included an artifact, why it is important, and how it applies to your professional goals. You can use reflection to convey what you know, what you can do, how you approach new situations, solve problems, or embrace opportunities, or who you are as a learner or employee. It also may highlight common themes across your experience and describe for the reader how your experiences tie together. Critical thinking through reflection helps you to tell a coherent, professional story about yourself. It tells your professional audience what you bring to the table.

When creating your reflective writing, you should think about the different components of each competency as outlined in the MPA handbook and on the MPA website. Use the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) listed under each competency to think and talk about how you understand each competency and how the artifact demonstrates a *specific* KSA.

Reflect upon your experience by answering questions such as:

- What did you learn and how does it apply to your professional goals?
- What tangible skill relative to the specific competency did you learn? How does the artifact demonstrate the skill?
- What does your work show about you to a professional audience?
- How did you meet a challenge you encountered?
- How did or how could you use the information to solve problems?
- What would you do differently in the future based on your experience?
- How have you changed as a result of your experience?

**Note:** If you are pursuing a graduate certificate in election administration or nonprofit organizations and community governance, your reflective writing, must address all student learning outcome for the graduate certificate. These can be found in the MPA handbook.

### **Technical Requirements for your ePortfolio**

#### *Selecting a Platform*

There are many platforms that can be used to create an ePortfolio. Auburn University's ePortfolio Project has identified four free platforms that they support: Wix, Weebly, WordPress, and Google Sites. Although any of the four platforms can be used to create an ePortfolio, it is useful to look at what each platform offers to find the one that best fits your goals. Visit the ePortfolio Project website for information on each of the four available platforms.

#### *Required ePortfolio Components*

While we encourage you to be creative in how you design and develop your ePortfolio, and in your presentation of artifacts to support the goals of the MPA ePortfolio, **the following components (with supporting artifacts as indicated) are required for all MPA student ePortfolios. Please use the ePortfolio Checklist to be sure you have included all required components. Turn in the ePortfolio checklist to your faculty reviewer when you send them the link to your ePortfolio.** You are free to include additional information, tabs, and artifacts, beyond what is required here.

- 1) Intro/Bio
- 2) Career Objectives/Professional Goals
- 3) Your Public Service Philosophy
- 4) Resume/Contact info

- 5) Internship (POLI 7920): You should present your internship as a separate component (tab) in the ePortfolio. The presentation of your internship should include a reflective essay that addresses the way the internship has enhanced your professionalism across all five MPA core competencies. 2 artifacts from your internship must be included. The artifacts should be work you completed during the internship. The artifacts should *not* be the assignments associated with the internship course.
- 6) MPA Core Competencies: Each of the five core competencies must be illustrated using at least 2 artifacts per competency. Each competency must be introduced using a Reflective Essay. The ten artifacts used to demonstrate the five core competencies must include:
  - a. 6 artifacts from core courses (Your ePortfolio must include at least one artifact from a core course for each competency. Each core course needs to be represented across competencies. You may not use the same artifact twice.)
  - b. 1 artifact from your concentration and/or certificate (if applicable)
  - c. 4 additional artifacts that come from anywhere in your MPA coursework/experiences that you choose. 3 additional artifacts if pursuing a concentration or graduate certificate. (This includes professional reports, presentations, infographics, brochures and flyers, etc.)

**NOTE:** Students who submit an ePortfolio that does not at a minimum include each of these elements will automatically fail.

#### *Requirements on Artifacts That Include Group/Collaborative Work*

If you would like to use an artifact in your ePortfolio that is the product of group and/or collaborative work, the following stipulations apply:

- If the artifact is part of a group project, you must identify your *specific* contribution in the Reflective Essay introducing the artifact. Students who do not explicitly identify their contribution will fail.
- If the artifact is the product of purely collaborative work, and it is not possible to allocate specific parts of the product to individual students, you must explain your collaborative process in the Reflective Essay introducing the artifact. Students who do not explicitly discuss their collaborative process will fail.

#### **Other Resources**

This Roadmap is designed to help you identify and develop artifacts for your ePortfolio across the MPA curriculum and encourage reflection on how your experiences prepared you to accomplish your professional goals. There are other resources not included in this road map that will be helpful to you:

- Use the ePortfolio project website to see examples of other students' work. You can get ideas for selecting artifacts, website design and critical thinking through reflection. Keep in mind that some examples are better than others. You also will find information on all aspects of ePortfolio design. The website address is:  
<http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/eportfolio-project/>
- Also, visit the Student Resource section of the ePortfolio Project website for help with creating content, using technology, and more:  
<http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/eportfolio-project/student-resources/>
- Attend ePortfolio workshops offered to students by Auburn University and the ePortfolio project.
- Visit the Miller Writing Center in RBD Library for help in writing reflections for contextualizing your artifacts and to strengthen other examples of your written work.
- Utilize Auburn Photographic Services to schedule a free professional headshot to use in your ePortfolio:  
<http://wp.auburn.edu/photographicservices/>

- Utilize resources available at Auburn’s Media and Digital Resource Lab (MDRL) to record and edit video for your ePortfolio:

<http://www.lib.auburn.edu/mdrl/>

Examples of MPA student ePortfolios are available on the [MPA website](#).

### Frequently Asked Questions

This section is designed to help you troubleshoot e-Portfolio and to address commonly asked questions.

**Question(s): Can I use artifacts or materials from classes from before I entered the MPA program?**

**Answer:** Undergraduate courses are not permitted and the MPA program’s accrediting body does not permit it. In short, nothing from any undergraduate course can be part of your demonstration of Masters level work in a graduate degree in public service. You can use artifacts from coursework and experiences (including electives) as long as the classes were taken as part of your overall MPA coursework.

**Question(s): Can I use artifacts or materials from classes from electives I took as part of the MPA program?**

**Answer:** You can use artifacts from coursework and experiences (including electives) as long as the classes were taken as part of your overall MPA coursework. Your e-portfolio must include the following:

- a. 6 artifacts from core courses
- b. 1 artifact from your concentration and/or certificate (if applicable)
- c. 4 additional artifacts an come from anywhere in your MPA coursework/experiences that you choose. 3 additional artifacts if pursuing a concentration or graduate certificate.

**Question(s): Can I use artifacts or materials that are not on the list on Pages 2 and 3?**

**Answer:** Yes – but they should be cleared first by your MPA faculty reviewer.

**Question(s): What should I do if I cannot think of any artifacts for a particular competency?**

**Answer:** You have several options if you find yourself in this situation. First – refer to the table on Pages 2 and 3. You can also speak to other MPA students and ask what artifacts they are using for that competency and why. If that does not help – make an appointment with your MPA faculty reviewer.

**Question(s): I am taking one of my core classes right now, I don't have much writing yet. I don't know that I will have much besides the answers to discussion questions before the deadline. Should I just use what I have?**

**Answer:** Consult with the faculty member to identify potential alternatives, work ahead to produce some portion of the competency, or identify the artifact and note what the artifact will be. This needs to be completed by the final submission.