

This year, each campus is conducting a pilot program using portfolio review. A complete portfolio is now a requirement for passing the course. As this program is new, here are some answers to questions you might have about the portfolio pilot.

**Question: What is a portfolio?**

A portfolio is a “*purposeful* collection of student work that exhibits to the student (and/or others) the student’s *efforts, progress, or achievement* in (a) given area(s). This collection must include: student participation in selection of portfolio content; the criteria for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of self-reflection” (Northwest Evaluation Association, 1991, p. 4; cf. Meyer, Schuman, & Angelo).

**Question: Why has the faculty decided to use portfolio review?**

Faculty in the English Department have chosen portfolios as our common form of assessment because we believe that portfolios have many advantages over a single, timed piece of writing.

*Advantages of portfolio assessment for students:*

- Allows for your total writing process to be considered in the assessment of your writing proficiency, rather than one timed exam.
- Allows you to show your writing as it develops over the course of the semester and through a variety of assignments.
- Demonstrates the amount of time, effort, and improvement that has gone into your writing process by including your revisions.
- Helps you to understand the overall strengths and weaknesses of your writing so that you can make effective changes.
- Motivates you to put your best effort into each assignment, to save and value your work, and to become more accountable for your writing.
- Assures consistency between different sections of the course because all portfolios will be assessed using a common rubric.

*Advantages of portfolio assessment for your instructor:*

- Provides a record of your progress over the semester; of your attention to suggestions from instructors, peers, and tutors; of the amount of revision and effort that has gone into your writing; and of the degree of your overall improvement.
- Provides the perspective of other instructors in assessing student writing.
- Allows for instructors to share teaching materials and techniques.

**Question: Will the portfolio contain all my work for the class?**

No. It will contain essays that you select to reflect your ability to draft and revise essays that meet with the EN 101/101A objectives. It will also contain a cover letter that explains why you chose these essays and how your work has progressed over the course of the semester.

**Question: How will my portfolio be assessed?**

Your instructor will use a common assessment rubric (included on the back of this pamphlet). This rubric reflects Montgomery College’s standards for an acceptable EN 101/101A portfolio.

**Question: How can I make sure that the work in my portfolio meets departmental standards?**

- Portfolios provide you with the opportunity to revise your work over the course of the semester. Even after you submit an essay for a grade, you can continue to work on it to bring it to an acceptable level.
- Your instructor’s feedback should help you understand areas in which you need improvement.
- You can also seek feedback from your instructor and from Writing Center tutors.

**Question: When will my portfolio be collected and what should be in it?**

*Portfolios will be collected toward the end of the semester and must contain the following:*

- Clean copies of at least two essays of your choosing, one of which must use outside reading(s) and include appropriate documentation;
- A cover letter that reflects on the essays in the portfolio and your progress over the course of the semester (guidelines to be distributed);
- Your instructor’s assignment guidelines for each essay included;
- An assessment rubric that you have filled out for your own work.

*Either the cover letter or one of the essays must be written in class.*

**Question: How does the portfolio factor into my final grade?**

You are required to turn in a complete portfolio in order to pass the course. However, your instructor will determine the specific grade for your portfolio, as well as your final grade for the course. Your instructor’s feedback throughout the semester should help you determine what you need to do to succeed in the course. Instructors may schedule conferences to discuss your progress in the course. If your instructor does not require conferences, you should arrange to meet with your instructor.

**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE EN101/101A PORTFOLIO RUBRIC**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader: Student    Instructor    Outside Reader    (circle one)

*Exceptional*    *Acceptable*    *Unacceptable*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Focus and Organization:** Essays respond to instructor’s assignment guidelines with a

strong, clear, and specific thesis statement. A thesis statement controls each essay. Each support paragraph has a clear connection to the thesis. Essays have clear introductory, support, and concluding paragraphs. Every paragraph is unified by a single concept, and the details within each paragraph are organized logically. Author makes effective transitions within and between paragraphs.

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**Content and Development:** Thesis claims

are supported effectively. Author fully develops the main idea of each paragraph by using accurate, detailed, and descriptive examples. At least one essay demonstrates author’s engagement with other writers or thinkers. When using language and ideas of others, author quotes or paraphrases effectively and uses appropriate signal phrases and documentation.

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**Audience Awareness and Style:** Author

presents material in a sophisticated and engaging manner that is meaningful to outside readers. Author is aware of audience and has gone beyond writing about “me.”

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**Grammar and Mechanics:** Grammar and mechanical errors do not interfere with clarity. Author uses a variety of sentence types appropriately.

Comments and Suggestions:

The  
Montgomery  
College

Portfolio Pilot  
for EN 101/101A

Some  
Questions  
and  
Answers  
For Students

Portfolio is \_\_\_\_\_Acceptable \_\_\_\_\_Unacceptable

